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ABSTRACT

This document contains the proceedings from a one-day symposium designed to illuminate the history of the labor movement in Florida. The proceedings are organized into two parts: Part 1 "Topics in Florida Labor History" features "Labor History in Florida: What Do We Know? Where Do We Go?" (R. Zieger); "Workers' Culture and Women's Culture in Cigar Cities" (N. Hewitt); "Organizing Fishermen in Florida: The 1930s and 1940s" (B. Green); "Farmworkers and Farmworkers' Unions in Florida" (D. M. Barry); "Shadows from the Past: Documentary Film Making in Florida's Fields" (J. Applebaum); and "Oral History: Building Blocks for Historical Research" (S. Proctor). Part 2 is entitled "Recollections from the Past: The Florida Labor Movement from a Personal Perspective." This part contains the remarks given at the symposium by eight persons from the private sector: Andrew E. Dann, Sr., Gene C. Russo, Pernell Parker, and Joseph H. Kaplan and four from the public sector: Glbert Porter, Rodney Davis, Charles Hall, and James Sherman. (DB)

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Florida's Labor History A Symposium

PROCEEDINGS

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FLORIDA'S LABOR HISTORY
A SYMPOSIUM

PROCEEDINGS

Edited by Margaret Gibbons Wilson, Ph.D.

Transcribed by Dolores McGee

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CONTENTS

Preface.................................i

PART ONE - TOPICS IN FLORIDA LABOR HISTORY

Labor History in Florida: What Do We Know? Where Do We Go?
Robert H. Zieger.................................1

Workers' Culture and Women's Culture in Cigar Cities
Nancy Hewitt.................................13

Organizing Fishermen in Florida: The 1930s and 1940s
Ben Green.................................29

Farmworkers and Farmworkers' Unions in Florida
D. Marshall Barry.................................35

Shadows From the Past: Documentary Film Making in Florida's Fields
Jo Applebaum.................................57

Oral History: Building Blocks for Historical Research
Samuel Proctor.................................67

PART TWO - RECOLLECTIONS FROM THE PAST: THE FLORIDA LABOR MOVEMENT FROM A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Andrew E. Dann, Sr. 79
Gene C. Russo.................................83
Pernell Parker.................................87
Joseph H. Kaplan.................................91

THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Gilbert Porter.................................97
Rodney Davis.................................101
Charles Hall.................................105
James Sherman.................................111

PREFACE

These Proceedings are the outgrowth of a one-day symposium held on November 18, 1989. "Florida's Labor History: A Symposium" was designed to illuminate an all-too-often neglected facet of Florida's history--the history of the Florida labor movement. It was my goal to bring together a variety of people who had studied and written about the Florida labor movement, been a part of the labor movement, or both. The symposium offered a blending of the analytical expertise of historians, writers, and film makers with the first-hand recollections of some of those who participated in the development of the labor movement in Florida.

The Proceedings open with a thoughtful review of existing scholarship in "Florida's Labor History: What Do We Know? Where Do We Go?" presented by Robert H. Zieger, Professor of History at the University of Florida. Following this overview, Nancy Hewitt, Associate Professor of History at the University of South Florida explores the dynamics of the work experiences of women cigar workers in Tampa in "Workers' Culture and Women's Culture in the Cigar Cities. Next, Ben Green, a free-lance writer and author of **The Finest Kind: A Celebration of a Florida Fishing Village,** shares his findings about "Organizing Fishermen in Florida: The 1930s and the 1940s." The experiences of Florida's farmworkers is the topic of the next presentation, "Farmworkers and Farmworkers' Unions in Florida," by D. Marshall Barry, Director of Applied Research at the Center for Labor Research & Studies at Florida International University. Yet another facet of the experiences of Florida's farmworkers is explored by Jo Applebaum, assistant film editor and archival researcher, in "Shadows From the Past: Documentary Film Making in Florida's Fields."

Samuel Proctor, Distinguished Service Professor of History at the University of Florida and Director of the University's Oral History Program, offers an excellent framework for understanding the value of, as well as the potential problems of, an oral history program in his "Oral History: Building Blocks for Historical Research." Professor Proctor's remarks set the tone and framework for the personal recollections that follow.

In selecting participants for the "Personal Recollection" part of the symposium, I attempted to strike a balance between the public and private sectors as well as having representation from a variety of occupations. Since I had decided that a broad range of occupations were to be represented, time constraints meant that the depth of each presentation would, of necessity, be limited. The transcribed recollections will form the beginning of an oral history collection of the Florida labor movement to be housed at Florida International University.

Four speakers represented the private sector. One had worked in the building trades, another was a farm worker, yet another was in the communications industry, and one was a member of the legal profession. Andrew Dann, Sr. with the Carpenters; Gene C. Russo of the Communication Workers of America; Pernell Parker of the United Farm Workers of America; and Joseph H. Kaplan an attorney who has represented numerous labor unions in Florida, shared their recollections at the symposium. I had also planned to have Stetson Kennedy, Southeast Education Director of the CIO-PAC during the 1930s and 1940s, and Anita Cofino, International Representative of the Amalgamated Clothing & Textile Workers Union and the former Miami Director of the Political and Education Department of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union speak, but unfortunately illness prevented both of them from attending the symposium.

Representing the public sector were two former teachers, a firefighter, and an arbitrator who has been with the Florida Public Employee Relations Commission since the 1970s. Gilbert Porter of the Florida State Teachers' Association; Rodney Davis of FEA/United; Charles Hall of the International Association of Fire Fighters; and James Sherman, an arbitrator who has heard over 2,000 arbitration cases, spoke about their experiences.

The symposium and published proceedings were funded in part by a grant from the Florida Endowment for the Humanities and sponsored by the Center for Labor Research & Studies at Florida International University in cooperation with the Louis Wolfson II Media History Center, Inc. Additional support came from the Miami Dade Public Library, the Florida AFL-CIO, the South Florida AFL-CIO, and numerous local unions.

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Director of Research
Center for Labor Research & Studies
Florida International University
Margaret Gibbons Wilson
Symposium Coordinator

PART ONE

TOPICS IN FLORIDA LABOR HISTORY

FLORIDA LABOR HISTORY:
WHAT DO WE KNOW, WHERE DO WE GO?

ROBERT H. ZIEGER

Robert Zieger received his Ph.D. from the University of Maryland. He has been on the faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Wayne State University, and is now a professor at the University of Florida. Dr. Zieger is the recipient of various awards and fellowships. He is the author of five books and numerous articles and is consultant and Series Editor for the collection, **The CIO and Industrial Unionism in America,** *a microfilm collection developed by University Publications of America. He is currently working on a history of the CIO and is editing a collection of essays to be published as "Organized Labor in the Twentieth Century."*

As a relative newcomer to Florida, I am impressed with the vigor and accomplishments of the labor history community in our state. I am happy to be part of this celebration of Florida's working people and their history. Peggy Wilson and the Center for Labor Research and Studies are to be congratulated for their energy and enterprise in putting together such a balanced and challenging program.

In addressing the questions raised by the title of my speech, I wish to make three central points. They are: 1) The history of labor in Florida is rich and diverse; 2) there is a substantial body of historical literature that provides a basis for scholars and students to build upon; 3) in the ongoing agenda of Florida labor history, the gathering of resource material will be critical.

1. The history of labor in Florida is rich and diverse. It used to be that the term "labor history" meant the history of labor organizations, strikes, collective bargaining, industrial relations, perhaps radicalism. Labor history and union history were virtually synonymous. Over the past generation, however, historians have been broadening and changing the definitions of what constitutes labor history. The "new" labor history takes as its subject the workplace, the neighborhood, and the church or ethnic social club, in addition to the union hall and the picket line. Most workers in America, most of the time, have not been members of unions. Organized labor's peak membership, expressed as a percentage of the non-agricultural labor force,

occurred in the early 1950s when one in three non-agricultural workers belonged to a union. Since then, this percentage has dropped, especially over the past decade. Now, some estimates calculate that only 12% of non-agricultural workers are in unions. Thus, to confine labor history to the subject of union history is to miss at least two-thirds, and more likely four-fifths, of the labor force.

If this proposition is true nationally, it is even more so in the South, including Florida. Thus, students of southern and especially of Florida's labor history can only welcome the broadened focus of recent labor scholarship. Because if labor history equals union history, the Florida story must be a limited, if on occasion, an intriguing and edifying one. But if labor history means the history of work and of workers, Florida, as the earliest settled of the American states, is seen to have the longest and one of the most diverse labor histories of any of the American states. Florida encompasses an unusually wide variety of enterprises, occupations, systems of labor control, and ethnic and gender labor force mixes. Whether we are talking about slaves toiling on the St. Johns River plantations, free Blacks building communities, running cattle, and cultivating borderland settlements during the Spanish period, lumber and phosphate workers, or railroad construction workers, fishermen, and sugar cane cutters; cigar makers, building tradesmen who even today are transforming the state, aerospace and airline workers, shipbuilders, metal fabricating workers, teachers, and government employees; and what about the men and women who have staffed the DisneyWorlds, nursing homes, and resort developments? Note too that Florida's labor history has been multi-ethnic and remains so today, though the ethnic mix has changed over time.[1]

Thus, as the oldest of the American states and now as one of the largest, Florida offers an unusually wide variety in its distinctive labor history, both by virtue of its longevity and its economic, occupational, and ethnic diversity.

By none of this do I mean to slight the important history of labor unions and labor protest in Florida. Indeed, part of the richness and variety of which I have been speaking consists of the real traditions of labor activism. Unions that have played major roles in the state include the Machinists, the Teachers, the NEA, the construction trades, the Pilots, the Teamsters, the Transport Workers, the Shipyard Workers, the Pulp and Paper Workers, AFSCME, IBEW, UAW, United Steelworkers, Cigarmakers, Communications Workers, Railroad Workers, and a host of others. The long saga of cigarmakers' unions in Tampa and Ybor City, with their multi-ethnic character and their solid embeddedness in local ethnic cultures; organizations forged by black dockers and timber workers during

Reconstruction; the building of teachers and public employee unions in the 1960s and 1970s; the Machinists' efforts to bring union standards to the airline and aerospace industries after World War II; efforts of the Service Employees, Teamsters, AFSCME, Retail Clerks, and agricultural workers' unions to penetrate chronically low-wage sectors. The vigorous labor radicalism that made Jacksonville Florida's "red city" in the Progressive Era. And let us not forget the labor history that the thousands of union retirees bring to our state.

2. If labor history, properly understood, is all around us in Florida, there is also a vigorous body of scholarly achievement and enterprise to value and to build upon. Your program reflects some of this activity. Cigarmakers have attracted probably the greatest attention on the part of scholars, with Gary Mormino's and George Pozzetta's, *The Immigrant World of Ybor City*, and ongoing work by Nancy Hewitt, Robert Ingalls, and Gerald Poyo being particularly notable.[2] This work on the cigar industry is particularly responsive to the claims of the new labor and social history. Mormino and Pozzetta's book, for example, winner of the prestigious Saloutos Prize for work in immigration history, combines stirring chronicles of "traditional" labor activities--organizing campaigns, strikes, union growth--with a rich and sensitive exploration of the distinctive multi-ethnic immigrant world. The authors take us into the coffee houses, the cultural centers, and the neighborhoods of Ybor City and West Tampa, as well as into the cigar factories themselves. Union battles there are aplenty but permeating them is the autonomous and distinctive immigrant world that stood apart from the proscriptions of the dominant Anglo world view and often the preferences of "bread-and-butter" labor organizers. Nancy Hewitt's work highlights the key role of women in the cigar factories and the vibrant Tampa and Ybor City communities. Ingalls's recent, *Urban Vigilantes in the New South*, depicts the urban counterpart to rural peonage and forced labor, namely the long-lived pattern of elite terrorism with which Tampa's "best people" fought unionization in the half century after 1880.[3]

The agricultural and extractive sectors have also produced important work, much of it chronicling exploitative working conditions. Notable is Ben Green's work on the Gulf Coast fishing workers, much of it based on the testimony of the fishermen and women and labor organizers who worked among these distinctive people.[4] Sarah H. Brown's, Robert Lauriault's, and Jerrell Shofner's poignant studies of black timber and forest products workers in the brutal North Florida camps of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[5] Studies of black Floridians' efforts to put workplace meaning into newfound freedoms such as Jerrell Shofner's work on longshoremen and lumber workers in the post-Civil War period.[6] Raymond Mohl's recent examination of Bahamian immigration to Miami adds to our knowledge of the diversity of South Florida's labor force.[7] An intriguing recent article by David Sowell traces the implications of the switch from slave to "free" labor in Alachua county in the late 19th century.[8]

Several important studies of agricultural workers add painful pieces to the Florida mosaic. Richard Amundson's study of bound labor in the early citrus industry of Central Florida; Cindy Hahamovich's forthcoming study of post-World War II agricultural migrant labor; Shofner's articles on debt slavery and legally sanctioned (and legally conducted) terrorism among black sugar and forest workers through the World War II years.[9] Marshall Barry's participant-observer accounts, as indicated in this morning's program, provide valuable historical material.[10] Most recently, Alec Wilkinson's *Big Sugar*, depicting the harshness and insecurity of the lives of today's West Indian canecutters, while contemporaneous in focus, contains important (if, alas, undocumented) historical information.[11]

The themes of workers' autonomy and protest are important in Florida labor history. At opposite ends of its chronology, for example, the work of Jane Landers and Wayne Flynt point to successful efforts of Florida workers to shape their environment. Landers' 1987 dissertation, "Black Society in Spanish St. Augustine, 1784-1921," based in part on materials unearthed (literally) in the Ft. Mose digs, examines the success of black Floridians in the 18th and early 19th centuries in creating a stable outpost in Spanish North Florida. Soldiers, cattlemen, craftsmen, and agriculturalists, these black settlers, many of them refugees from the slave settlements of Georgia and South Carolina, built a vigorous community on the basis of toil and enterprise.[12]

Wayne Flynt's work on early twentieth century Florida helps to modify the picture of Florida as a graveyard for unionism. In Pensacola, virtually city-wide organization early in the century brought unionization to railroad repair, longshoring, transit, and construction workers. City-wide strikes along with impressive political mobilization, culminating in a wave of labor protest in 1908, demonstrated organized labor's surprising power in the Progressive Era. Flynt's account of Jacksonville in the World War I era also gives lie to the myth of laborite passivity in the Sunshine State. "Floridians," Flynt reminds us, "cast the highest percentage of Socialist votes of any southern state in the 1904, 1908, and 1912 national elections." Flynt's chronicle of postwar labor unrest in the state also is instructive: During 1919 "Some 2700 Jacksonville railroad workers walked off their jobs . . . and were joined by train employees at St. Augustine, Fort Pierce, Key West, Tallahassee, Tampa, St. Petersburg, and a dozen other Florida cities." Strikes among telegraph workers in Jacksonville, Pensacola, and Miami added to the ferment. "Jacksonville . . . boasted 38 AFL locals," while

Tampa was home to an equal number of unions, most based in the cigar factories and shipyards. On a more somber note, violence swept the phosphate mines of west-central Florida, as employers recruited (and allegedly terrorized) black strikebreakers. Flynt counts at least 40,000 Florida workers on strike that year and credits the nascent labor movement with substantial political influence, although its candidate, Gov. Sidney Catts, did go down to defeat in the election of 1920. Despite these setbacks, Jacksonville retained a strong labor presence, with the mayor declaring that "Labor elected me, and any time labor wants my job you can have it. All you need to do is to pass a resolution in the central trades and labor union, saying that I am not giving satisfaction . . . and you won't have to impeach me. I'll get out when you say."[13] In the late 1960s, St. Petersberg's black sanitation workers were less fortunate in their municipal government, but, an article by Darryl Paulson and Janet Stiff indicates, they achieved some long-lasting changes in the city's political and racial climate.[14] Complex relations among Florida politicians, DuPont interests, and striking railroad workers are chronicled in Burton Altman's account of the bitter Florida East Coast rail strike of the 1960s and 1970s.[15]

This brief outline of the existing literature wouldn't be complete without mentioning the work of a couple of my own students. Gilbert Gall, who teaches at Penn state, for example, has been examining the "right-to-work" issue in Florida history, exploding misconceptions about workers' voting behavior. He finds that in fact Florida workers voted substantially against "right-to-work" in the decisive 1943 referendum; and that Florida's industrial and construction workers (despite the fact that the black community, invariably an anti-right-to-work bloc, was largely disfranchised) compare favorably to their counterparts in key northern industrial states in their electoral hostility to right-to-work.[16] And Jim Sullivan, currently in our graduate program at UF, has just completed a splendid senior thesis on the 1968 Florida teachers' strike, based on extensive examination of unused archival sources and extensive interviewing of rank-and-file participants. It will serve as the basis for a fine M.A. thesis and, undoubtedly, as the basis for important publications.[17]

3. The ongoing agenda of Florida labor history. Here there are some easy things to do and some hard things to do. First the easy part.

It is easy to list topics and areas in the field of Florida labor history needing attention. For starters, the whole 1920-1950 period, central to the history of the modern American labor movement, remains largely uncharted insofar as Florida is concerned. Then there are the construction trades, surely a fruitful subject in a state almost literally built from scratch (at least in terms of public facilities and major urban centers) in the 20th century. Yet we know little, aside from scattered comments, about the lives of construction workers or the history of unionism in the construction field.

How about public employees and teachers? Several students in my seminar have been digging up material on the local level illuminating the working lives of Florida teachers in the 20th century--teachers in a rural north Florida county in one case, black teachers in another. Yet we have barely scratched the surface of this area of success in organized labor's course in Florida.

The contributions of workers to Florida's postwar aerospace and defense industries, which had many episodes of labor conflict, await their chronicler, as do workers' experiences in the nursing homes, hospitals, entertainment, and tourist complexes.

Even in the industrial sector there is a story to tell in Florida, even though heavy industry is not central to the state's economy. My own work on the pulp and paper industry led me to intriguing material contained in the pulp and paper workers union's files on the development of segregated unionism in the International Paper mills of Fernandina and Panama City in the 1930s.[18] Materials in other national union files--the CIO Shipyard Workers, AFL materials in Madison, Wisconsin--help to illuminate the experiences of Florida workers in the booming World War II shipyards. Students of Florida labor history also can find important materials in the files of federal government bodies: peonage hearings (now available on microfilm) contain rich materials on Florida conditions for the early 20th century.[19] Records of such federal agencies as the National Mediation Board (railroads and airlines), the National Labor Relations Board and the National War Labor Board, the Fair Employment Practices Commission, the U.S. Conciliation and Mediation Service, housed in Washington and Atlanta, are additional rich sources. Nor should we forget oral history materials. At Gainesville, for example, the oral history collections developed under the leadership of my colleague Samuel Proctor contain some 3,000 transcripts, many containing important materials on work, economic conditions, and social movements, and some directly related to major events in labor history, such as the 1968 teachers' job action.

Now for the harder part: The collection, processing, and preservation of our indigenous records relating to Florida's labor history. The effort to write the ongoing history of labor in Florida requires not only the work of historians, graduate students, and independent scholars and researchers. Unionists, activists, and workers play a central role as well. Without records, historians have nothing to write about. My own work has benefitted enormously from the efforts to anonymous corresponding secretaries and union officers who have resisted the temptation to throw out those dusty records and create some more filing space. Several state labor history societies, notably those in Wisconsin and Michigan, have launched systematic programs of writing local union history. Properly conducted, these programs involve union members in interaction with their own past and result not only in locally generated histories but in the identification and preservation of records and in oral histories, all of which in turn become part of the ongoing archival holdings.

As I was thinking about this talk earlier this fall, one of the major points I planned to raise was the need for systematic collection and retrieval of the records of the Florida labor movement and related organizations and individuals. At the time, before receiving the conference brochure, I made some inquiries of those experienced in the establishment of archival depositories in the field of labor history. My idea was to call upon unionists and activists to contemplate donating their records to a depository and thus to assist in the work of establishing the history of labor in Florida and perhaps to provide some friendly advice on how this work might most productively be done.

The unexpected announcement in the brochure of the creation of the Florida Labor History Archives would seem to obviate the necessity for these admonitions and advice. Still, one of the key themes that came up repeatedly in my conversations with archivists (and one that resonated entirely with my own experience as a researcher) was that the establishment of an archive is a complex and difficult process. So I thought I would pass along, both to those in charge of the new archive and to those likely to be its donors and clients, some of what I learned.

According to Philip P. Mason of Wayne State University in Detroit, dean of American labor archivists, there are several steps absolutely essential for the launching of a successful archive:

1. Facilities. A new archive, Mason believes, needs at least 5,000 linear feet of space for the first two years alone. It needs sophisticated environmental controls and tight security. It needs commitments from its host institution for future growth of physical space according to carefully negotiated plans.

2. Staff. Before launching a labor history archive, Mason believes, you need at least two, and preferably three, full-time professional archivists, at least one of them with substantial experience in the labor history field. Labor archives have their own rhythms and requirements; to attain credibility among donors and scholars, an archive must simultaneously solicit and acquire collections, process collections, and provide research facilities.

3. Travel, cartage, and shipping. Every extant labor history archive has found that it has had to budget substantial funds for the identification, packaging, and handling of materials, some of which are lost permanently unless the archive can act promptly. In order to make proper determinations about collections, archivists must be able to go on site, often with little notice.

4. Ongoing budgetary commitments on the part of the host institution and, it is desirable, elements in the labor movement. Expenses for storage, preservation, and security, along with those for special projects, oral history initiatives, brochures and exhibits are very substantial. Donors, Mason believes, should be particularly careful in satisfying themselves as to the proposed archive's budgetary arrangements.

Mason's observation is that too many would-be labor history archival programs have ignored the budgetary imperative and have become, at best, warehouses, clogged with documents that their inadequate staffs cannot process and that historians cannot use. Worse, records have been lost because ill-funded and poorly conceived programs of collection have not been able to follow through and have had to forego collecting because of their inability to inspect, arrange for the transport of, and/or process records.

I don't mean to sound negative. I must confess that I just do not know if the proposed Florida Labor History Archives announced in the symposium brochure meets these requirements. Has there been consultation with archival experts in the labor field? Has the wisdom of colleagues associated with Florida's other academic institutions and interested in labor history been sought? How broad and inclusive has been the preparation for the establishment of so ambitious a project? What are the new archive's budgetary arrangements? The establishment of an archive designed to embrace the historical record of Florida's working women and men is a complex undertaking and must be done with maximum chances for success.

And there are several positive examples of state (or regional) labor history archives, notably those at San Francisco State University and Georgia State University (the Southern Labor Archives, where many of the records of the Florida State Federation of Labor are now housed). But, Mason believes, these centers have been successful precisely because they have sought the widest possible consultation with their various constituencies (unions and other donating bodies; graduate History programs in the area; experienced archivists brought in on a consulting basis). Those contemplating donating records will want to ask careful questions about collecting policies, facilities, budget, space, and potential usership before they commit themselves, especially if the archive is a newcomer in the labor history field.[20]

When I first moved to Florida from Michigan, some of my students and colleagues commiserated with me. True, the University of Florida offered exciting professional opportunities, especially in contrast to the dreary routine of academic life that had become the norm at Wayne State University, where I had been teaching. But Florida, they suggested, had no labor movement to speak of and no labor history. In Detroit, the ghosts of the past seemed to hover on every street corner. Each day on my way to work, I passed by Ford Highland Park site where the five dollar day had been invented. I looked out my window to see the billowing smokestacks of the River Rouge. I worked closely with Douglas Fraser, immediate past president of the UAW. Many of my students were union members, a number of my colleagues were labor historians. In comparison with this richness, what could Florida offer?

But they were wrong. Florida is the frontier. The collection and chronicling of the working history of our state has only just begun. In view of the disappointments and setbacks of the past, organized labor continues to face great challenges. But it is hard not to believe that someday Florida's vast numbers of service workers aren't going to get tired of living the low-wage life and that they are going to realize that hotels, nursing homes, and entertainment complexes are place-specific and can't be carted off to Mexico or Singapore to cut labor costs. Moreover, in my four years in Florida I have encountered a great deal of interest in labor history from among students, colleagues around the state, unionists, and just plain citizens. I have worked with the North Central Florida Central Labor Council on several projects. The efforts the Center for Labor Research and Study are impressive. Florida, in short, has a lively and energetic labor movement and a solid core of active enthusiasts for labor history. It is a great pleasure for me to participate in this excellent symposium and to take part in the coming of age of Florida labor history. Thank you.

NOTES

For a graphic, panoramic view of the historical world of Florida's working people, see Margaret Gibbons Wilson, *Floridians at Work: Yesterday and Today* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1989), a splendid book of photographs.

2. Gary Mormino and George Pozzetta, *The Immigrant World of Ybor City: Italians and Their Latin Neighbors in Tampa, 1885-1985* (Urbana and Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1987); Gerald Poyo, "The Impact of Cuban and Spanish Workers on Labor Organizing in Florida, 1870-1900," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 5:2 (Spring 1986): 46-63; Robert P. Ingalls, "Radicals and Vigilantes: The 1931 Strike of Tampa Cigar Workers," *Southern Workers and Their Union, 1880-1975*, ed. Merl E. Reed, Leslie S. Hough, and Gary M. Fink (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981), pp. 43-57; Robert Ingalls, "Vanquished but Not Convinced," *Southern Exposure*, 14:1 (1986): 51-58; Nancy Hewitt [and Delores Rio], "Women in Ybor City: An Interview with a Woman Cigarworker," *Tampa Bay History*, 7:2 (1985): 161-65. See also Louis A. Perez, "Reminiscences of a Lector: Cuban Cigar Workers in Tampa," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 57 (October 1978): 129-40; Durwood Long, "'La Resistencia': Tampa's Immigrant Labor Union," *Labor History*, 6:3 (Fall 1965): 193-213; and John C. Appel, "The Unionization of Florida Cigarmakers and the Coming of the War with Spain," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 36:1 (1956): 38-49.

3. Robert P. Ingalls, *Urban Vigilantes in the New South: Tampa, 1882-1936* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988).

4. Ben Green, *Finest Kind: A Celebration of a Florida Fishing Village* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1985).

5. Sarah H. Brown, "Peonage in the New South: Turpentine Laborers in Florida," unpublished paper, Georgia State University, n.d. (Zieger's possession); Robert N. Lauriault, "From Can't to Can't: The North Florida Turpentine Camp, 1900-1950," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 67:3 (January 1989): 310-28; Jerrell H. Shofner, "Postscript to the Martin Tobert Case: Peonage as Usual in the Florida Turpentine Camps," ibid., 60:2 (October 1981): 161-73.

6. Jerrell H. Shofner, "The Labor League of Jacksonville: A Negro Union and White Strikebreakers," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 50:3 (January 1972): 278-82; Jerrell H. Shofner, "The Pensacola Workingman's Association: A Militant Negro Labor Union During Reconstruction," *Labor History*, 13:4 (Fall 1972): 555-559; Jerrell H. Shofner, "Militant Negro Laborers in Reconstruction Florida," *Journal of Southern History*, 39:3 (August 1973): 397-408.

7. Raymond Mohl, "Black Immigrants: Bahamians in Early Twentieth-Century Miami," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 65:3 (January 1987): 271-97.

8. Daniel Sowell, "Racial Patterns of Labor in Postbellum Florida: Gainesville, 1870-1900," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 63:4 (April 1985): 434-44.

9. Richard J. Amundson, "Henry S. Sanford and Labor Problems in the Florida Orange Industry," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 43:3 (January 1965): 229-43; Jerrell H. Shofner, "The Legacy of Racial Slavery: Free Enterprise and Forced Labor in Florida in the 1940s," *Journal of Southern History*, 47:3 (August 1981): 411-26. Cindy Hahamovich is completing a doctoral dissertation at the University of North Carolina on the subject of East Coast migrant labor in the post-1945 period.

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WORKERS' CULTURE AND WOMEN'S CULTURE IN THE CIGAR CITIES

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In present-day Ybor City, "Italian, Spanish, and Cuban-Americans, most of them [men] well past seventy," still "make their ritual trek to L'Unione Italiana or Circulo Cubano" to engage "in fierce bouts of *scoppa* and dominoes." There, "interspersed between fortifying doses of *cafe con leche*," they recount to a younger generation, composed in part of historians, "wistful dreams about the 'good old days'."[1] Many of their dreams, however, could only have been dreamt by men; the events and incidents they recall most vividly are peopled with heroic males--*lectores* who read radical pamphlets and literary classics to the workers; union organizers who aroused the cigar makers to demand better wages and working conditions; celebrated patriots who fought for a free Cuba in the late 1800s.[2] Women, of course, were not absent from labor organization or revolutionary agitation; yet when women recount their "wistful dreams about the 'good old days'," they often seem, at first glance, less grandiose, more commonplace and therefore less historically noteworthy.

Differences in men's and women's memories of the cigar cities of Florida reflect a problem for labor historians across the country. In the Minneapolis General Strike of 1934, for instance, women played key roles in organization and support, yet contemporary newspapers and oral traditions focus on male truckers as the centerpiece of radical agitation and relegate women to the role of anxious and tearful wives and daughters.[3] Looking at the U.S. cigar industry outside of Florida, Patricia Cooper finds that members of the Cigar Makers' International Union were proud of their craft and their manhood. They forged brotherly bonds, she tells us, in the workplace, at saloons that served as union headquarters, and on the well-worn paths trod by tramping artisans. Quick to take offense, cigar makers frequently and forcefully challenged employer prerogatives and asserted their own. In most areas of the country, walkouts and strikes over poor stock, unfair dismissals, overbearing foremen or wage disputes were manly affairs, rooted in the CMIU's predominantly male membership.[4]

Among truckers, steel workers, carpenters, auto workers, cigar makers, and a range of other craft-proud laborers, the development and defense of a male work culture provides the common thread of union histories. Work culture embodies the "worker's own definition of a good day's work, their own sense of satisfying and useful labor"; it evolves out of daily interactions among workers, in the workplace and after hours in the union hall and saloon.[5] The female counterpart to this masculine work culture is generally assumed to be women's shared experiences and values rooted in the domestic sphere. Women's culture is comprised of the "physical and psychic...spaces where men were aliens"; of a "a socialization which fostered cooperative and empathetic traits and the ability to function through influence rather than authority"; and of the "parallel if not identical experiences of domestic and family life, of the making and management of a home, and of the rhythms and rituals of the life cycle." [6]

But how then do we understand the intersection between women's culture and workers' culture in Key West and Tampa, where women formed a significant and increasing proportion of cigarworkers from the 1870s through the 1940s? In these cities, unions were organized along industrial rather than craft lines and included white Cubans and Afro-Cubans, Italians and Spaniards, women and men, from the earliest days of the industry. In the seven years following the industry's founding in Tampa, 1887-1894, local factories suffered at least fourteen strikes; in half, women walked out alongside men, comprising from 12 to 22 per cent of the disaffected.[7] By 1901, almost half of Tampa's cigar union ranks were filled by women who would be central to strikes in 1901, 1916 and 1920-21 and would be the key to the industry's automation in the 1930s and 40s.

Clearly, we cannot fully evaluate the world of Ybor City, West Tampa, or Key West, that is the life of south Florida's cigar cities, until we know as much about women's as about men's experiences. Without such information, we cannot determine the extent to which women's culture and the community solidarity it fostered reinforced or inhibited work culture and the labor militancy by which it was defined. Growing evidence from other industries and other cities suggests that women's neighborhood networks, embracing both female wage earners and housewives, were often crucial to the success of labor movements. And this was true even where women and men did not share work places or laboring experiences.[8] How much more important female networks and resources might be then in Florida's cigar cities, where female tobacco strippers, banders and bunchers were employed in the same factories as their husbands, brothers, and fathers, and where some women literally worked side-by-side with men on the benches, rolling Clear Havanas.

Women were part of the Florida cigar industry from its founding in Key West in the 1860s. With both factory owners and workers fleeing war and political persecution in Cuba, south Florida was soon flooded with emigre families, eager to find the means of rebuilding their lives. Though in Cuba few women entered the cigar factories before 1870, and then only as tobacco strippers, in Key West and Tampa, women joined the cigar labor force as soon as the first factories opened and quickly entered the ranks of banders and bunchers as well as strippers.[9] Abbie M. Brooks, writing under the pseudonym of Silvia Sunshine, visited Key West in 1880, where she toured the Siedenberg & Co. factory, "the largest in the city, employing six hundred operatives. Upon the first floor," she wrote, "are seated eighty females engaged in stripping tobacco from the stems. Here mother and daughter work side by side, the daughter earning five dollars per week on account of her more nimble fingers, and the mother three. The daughter puffs a delicate cigarette, while the mother smokes a huge cigar..."[10]

In Ybor City, in May 1886, just weeks after the first cigar factories opened, a newspaper reporter noted that "many women worked at stripping," while men occupied the more highly skilled positions as rollers, bunchmakers, and *selectores*.[11] Two years later, a *Tampa Times* story claimed that a *lectora* was reading in the "ladies department" of the Vincente Martinez Ybor factory.[12] Though "ladies department" may just have been a fancy label for stripping rooms, the existence of a female reader suggested that no position was wholly closed to women. Though few other instances of *lectoras* have come to light, by 1890 women comprised up to one quarter of the hand rollers in some factories.

Yet women and men who sat next to each other on cigar benches, even those who joined together in strikes, might still perceive their work and their world differently. Women rollers, for instance, sat at the pinnacle of female success in an industry in which most of their sisters held more lowly positions. Men rollers had the hope of attaining still greater prestige, and higher pay, as *selectores*, *resagadores*, or *lectores*. The sexual division of labor within the factory was reinforced once workers left the shop. Men congregated at cafes and clubs or at the Labor Temple to socialize, exchange shopfloor gossip, or plan union activities or political campaigns. Women generally went home to begin a new round of chores among female kin and neighbors whose definition of work extended far beyond the factory bench. Even those women who wished to join in the activities of their male coworkers might find their options limited, not only by domestic responsibilities but also by popular conceptions of female propriety.

For a brief but critical moment in the industry's history in Florida notions of proper behavior were disrupted and domestic and political activities converged. During the 1880s and 90s, as Cubans fought to achieve both political independence in their homeland and economic security in their adopted land, new spaces for female activity opened in the workplace, the meeting hall, and the community. Through wage work, unpaid domestic labor, homebound piece work, care of children, boarders and refugees, soup kitchens and other communal institutions, unions and revolutionary clubs, emigre women provided skills and resources to sustain labor agitation in south Florida and rebel insurgencies in Cuba. Moreover, rapid growth in Key West and Tampa created frontier-like conditions which required the labor of every possible worker, including women. By 1900, more than 20 per cent of immigrant women in Tampa were working for wages with nearly two and one-half times as many Cuban women employed in the cigar industry as in any other single occupation.[13]

In the aftermath of war, cigar workers once again dedicated themselves to gaining a fair living in their adopted homeland. Strikes erupted before the final peace treaties were signed. On Labor Day 1899, after a short and successful strike, cigarworkers celebrated by entering a float in the local Labor Day parade "on which sat the 'Queen of Labor'," over whose throne ran the banner: "Labor Knows No Color, Creed, or Class."[14] At the same time, the workers formed *La Resistencia*, a powerful community-based union modelled on labor organizations in Havana. Embracing Afro- and white Cubans, women and men, sympathetic Italians, Spaniards, and even a few Anglos, *La Resistencia* organized workers in restaurants, box factories, and laundries as well as cigar factories. In 1900 female strippers formed their own *gremio*, or branch, with some 1200 members, nearly 40% of *Resistencia's* total membership among cigarworkers. Throughout the five-month strike of 1901, women remained in the forefront of action. They travelled to Key West to raise funds, and marched on the mayor's office to protest the arrest of male strikers for vagrancy. Women staffed soup kitchens, petitioned their Anglo sisters in Tampa and the governor in Tallahassee, took in evicted families and stretched strike rations. Though not even community solidarity could gain victory for the workers, there was no doubt that women were as vital to the struggle and as committed to continuing the strike as were men. Strikes in

1910, 1916, 1920-21, and 1931 would again bring women into the streets alongside men and would again demonstrate the importance of domestic as well as union resources to sustaining the cigar cities.[15]

Over this period, however, the solidarity of workers' culture would be tested continually as the balance between male and female workers began to shift. As the result of deskilling, the recruitment of Italian and Anglo "girls" by employers, and a variety of other factors, women workers increased in proportion to the overall cigar labor force in Florida. The existence of a new gender consciousness among female workers was suggested by a spontaneous walkout in 1916 led by women. They went the rounds of the factories calling out workers and when the men at Celestino Vega refused to leave their benches, the women jeered, "called [them] 'females' and offered their skirts to those who refused to quit."[16] After a prolonged strike in 1920-21, female strippers, unhappy with a proposed union settlement, claimed they "would stay out on strike regardless of the outcome of the vote," fully aware that by doing so they could "hold up a return to normalcy."[17]

If workers' culture and women's culture had become deeply intertwined in Florida's cigar cities from the 1870s to the turn-of-the century as a result of frontier conditions, revolutionary demands, and massive strikes, to what extent did women and men continue to share a community of interest across the cigar benches as the sexual division of labor changed after 1910? If we return to the cafes in Ybor City where the old men play *scoppa* and dominoes, drink *cafe con leche* and tell tales of yesteryear, we will hear much about the continuation of strikes and vigilante violence in this period, and about the demise of the cigar industry with the coming of machines. If, however, we go to the homes of the last generation of female hand rollers, women in their 80s and 90s will busy themselves offering coffee and cake along with their memories of the "good old days."

What is striking is how rarely either group mentions the opposite sex, except in conversations about marriage or courtship, and how differently they perceive such community institutions as clubs, union halls, even churches. There is still a common ground, a shared pride in the fine art of cigar making, and a shared regret in its loss to a younger generation. Yet for women the regrets do not seem as deep. Some took pride in their ability to make the transition to machine work, for instance. Others viewed childcare and domestic responsibilities as an alternate source of self-worth when factory work was no longer possible.

By examining the testimonies of female cigar workers who entered factory work in the 1920s and continued to work for wages at least through

World War II, we can illuminate the continued interconnections and the increased tensions between workers' and women's cultures. For these women--Cuban, Spanish and Italian--factory work, family, and community were intertwined. Daily struggles were shared with kin and neighbors, including men; yet there are also signs of a distinct woman's culture that flourished within the larger workers' culture of the cigar cities. And the signs of this distinctive culture appear in conversations about mutual aid societies and religion as well as about factories and unions.

While men talk about the clubs as places for recreation, a male space which provided the opportunity to exchange news, debate politics, and plan strikes, women talk mainly of the medical benefits that came with club membership. When asked abut her father's role in Circulo Cubano, Dolores Rio replied, "He belonged to the medical clinics." Rose Anello insisted that her family joined the Italian Club" just for the [medical] benefits."[18] Though both women attended club-sponsored dances and picnics when young and single, marriage and motherhood ended their involvement in such social activities. Nor was the union hall a more hospitable environment for women. During spontaneous walkouts, Rio claimed that "everyone went to the Labor Temple for a few hours to talk and drink coffee." But on a regular basis, the Temple was reserved for men.[19]

Even the failure of Latin cigar workers to support the church in Ybor City, West Tampa, and Key West may have reflected different sentiments on the part of men and women. Anticlericalism, born of Cubans' hatred for the Catholic church's support of Spanish rule on the island, probably shaped both male and female attitudes to religious worship. Yet when Dolores Rio explained her failure to attend Mass, she appealed to domestic, not political justifications: "If God is going to punish me, he's not going to punish me for not going to church, because he sees how busy my hands are--cooking, cleaning, laundry, children--I have to do this work on Sunday. All the women do." [20]

These differences, apparent from the earliest years of cigar production in South Florida, were heightened after 1930 as machines and war assured women's domination of the labor force. Moreover, native-born women from outlying communities, both black and white, joined the cigar workforce, displacing embittered and unemployed immigrant men. The clubs became havens for those men who had been replaced by machines, but they attracted fewer and fewer young members. Key West, Ybor City and West Tampa began to lose their aura of working-class prosperity, political radicalism, and cultural stimulation. And as cigar work became more mechanized and routinized, women cigarmakers more clearly saw their work as part of a strategy for economic survival rather than as the extension of a craft tradition.

When Dolores Rio was asked why she became a cigar maker, she replied: "Cigars, well, the only thing I can tell you is because I make the money; it's the only way I can make the money." Mrs. Rio was a third generation cigar worker whose family had roots in Spain, Cuba, and Key West and who spent twenty-seven of her fifty-one years in the industry as a bunchmaker and handroller. Her sentiments were echoed by Rose Anello, whose father, mother, and sisters were also cigar workers. She "had to quit school" in 1931 "because things were really bad . . . . Those days," she added, "What could you do? You quit school, you have to learn to make cigars." [21] Although both Rio and Anello were proud of their skills, they had entered cigar work not to extend a cultural heritage, but to earn much-needed wages.

The sense of economic purpose presented by these Cuban and Italian women was set within the confines of increasingly limited occupational mobility. Female cigar makers certainly realized the advantages they gained by their skill and compared themselves favorably with female strippers and banders, some of whom were literally as well as figuratively their sisters.[22] Yet, at the same time, they noted their own lack of alternatives. "There was no other way," Rio recalled. "That's all I knew, so I had to like it." [23] Mrs. Angie Garcia, the daughter of Italian immigrants and wife of a Cuban cigar roller, had aspired to a teaching career while a young girl. Economic demands cut short her education in the eighth grade, and after that, cigarmaking was her only option.[24] For some Ybor City girls even the notion of becoming a teacher was a novelty. As Anello noted, "You couldn't go to college. You didn't even know what college was." [25]

While a few immigrant daughters did manage to attend college and become teachers in the 1920s and 30s, most who failed to find work in cigars found their occupational choices curtailed further. Industrial jobs existed in other south Florida factories, such as those producing macaroni, mattresses, shoes, and boxes; but almost all of these jobs were unskilled. Beyond the factories, women found the standard occupations open to their sex in any city--domestic service, the sewing trades, laundry, keeping boarders, paid childcare, and prostitution.

The limitations of these choices were made more visible when immigrant daughters compared themselves to their brothers. Though more young men than women entered the cigar trade in the early years of Florida's development, after 1910, Cuban and Italian men were increasingly choosing jobs in other skilled trades, in construction, and in retail and wholesale ventures. For Italian women, in particular, the pattern was clear. "All a woman could do was making cigars. The men were different. They could be a mechanic, do body work, ...open a store, a grocery. But for a woman, all you could do was make cigars." [26] Though Cuban men stayed in the cigar factories longer, the trade began to lose its luster for them as well as the Depression and then automation diminished their chances to gain high wages and a respectable status through cigar work.[27]

Despite the increasing domination of the industry by women and machines, a sign in men's eyes of the decline of the craft, immigrant women did not deprecate their own labors. They continued to pride themselves on their skill and speed and recognized the importance of their economic contributions to family survival and mobility. Their support of male kin who sought to gain education or entry into a craft or a business was the more notable because they recognized men's collective efforts to restrict women's options prior to the changes imposed by technology. In the early factories, Rio recalled, "way back at the beginning, it was only men [handrollers and bunchmakers]. Then they start like they do now; they don't want the women. The only, the only thing the woman could do in the factory then was to strip.[28] Maria Pescador, former cigarmaker and now president of the cigarmakers' union local in Tampa, claimed that until the 1950s no women were allowed into the ranks of *selectores*. Rio explained this fact very simply: "For women, it's always hard to get a job when the men have them." [29] Nor did women always approve of male control of the work culture; many found men's use of cuspidors next to their benches "disgusting" and the attitudes of male cigarmakers toward women co-workers could be demeaning. If you were a woman bunchmaker standing between two male rollers, "they look up at you, yell at you if you're too slow, make jokes." [30] In that sense, the strippers, banders, and packers working in female-dominated departments might have been better off than those few women who first broke into more highly skilled and male-dominated ranks.

Nonetheless, for women the existence of distinctly female domains within the cigar industry was not simply the negative artifact of exclusion, but was also a positive opportunity to demonstrate the importance of women's networks and resources. The female subculture that developed within the larger workers' culture was nurtured in the "buckeyes" and *chinchallas* where girls first learned the trade, but it also extended beyond the factory doors.[31] Angie Garcia described the small buckeye where she and several friends trained for five weeks before entering the factory. They exchanged "girl talk and fooled around" during breaks and on the way to and from the shop, though they competed with each other during the day to gain skill and speed.[32]

Upon leaving the buckeye, Garcia was hired at the Centeo Factory in West Tampa where her mother worked. Her three sisters also worked in cigar factories as did the three sisters of Rose Anello. The youngest girl worked with Rose at the Santaella factory while the older two joined their mother first at Regensburg and later at Perfecto Garcia. Though it was Rose's father who got her first job, he soon left the cigar trade due to automation and cutbacks caused by the Depression. Dolores Rio's father, Jose Patino, also obtained his daughter's first factory job for her. Eight years later he, too, left the factory, though he retained his cigarmaking skills as the owner of a *chinchalla*.

Increasingly, women cigarmakers were seated at the benches next to other women. Then, with the transition to machines, what had once been a female subculture within the factory became the dominant work culture. Each machine required four workers, usually all women, who sat facing each other on four sides of the new metal contraption. Angie Garcia, like many other operators, worked on a team for "a long time with the same [women]." One of her teams, which included a pair of sisters, stayed together for thirteen years, producing more cigars and faster friendships.[33] Though ethnic and racial differences remained a source of tension among female co-workers, women's common experiences of work, courtship, marriage, domestic labor, pregnancy, and childcare cemented bonds of sisterhood among most workers.[34]

Women cigarmakers shared experiences not only with each other but also with mothers, sisters, and female friends who never entered the factory gate. The cigarmakers' sisterhood--unlike its antecedent, the craft-based brotherhood--extended deeply into the domestic domain. Women wage workers were particularly aware of the contributions of mothers to family survival through non-waged household labor. Angie Garcia's father died in 1918, leaving behind a wife and five young children. For many years thereafter Angie Garcia's mother continued to work full time in the factory and at home. During the ten-month long strike in 1920-21, her mother stretched the $4.50 weekly union benefits by taking in odd jobs, raising her own vegetables, and scrimping wherever possible. "I guess she had no holidays," Angie Garcia concluded quietly.[35]

Even with a husband at home, a wife might shoulder a heavy workload, and one which the presence of a male wage earner often made less visible. Dolores Rio compared housewives' work and the recognition it was accorded in Ybor City to women's labors on the frontier: "Husbands say their wives don't work, but women always work. Like my mother [Mrs. Patino]. She raised eight children. Grandma and two cousins also lived in the house. [We] got a duplex because so many people. My mother, she take care of children of women who work in factories, three or four at a time. And when I marry and have children, my mother take care of them too." In addition, she did "laundry, so much laundry, and cooking, of course. She even kept a vegetable garden to help out." Mrs. Patino also worked in her husband's *chinchalla*, though "he wouldn't say so; she just 'helped out.' But she worked there a lot, especially in slow times or when workers were hard to get." [36]

Women cigarmakers, much more often than their male counterparts, experienced two worlds of work--one in the factory and one at home. From their home, they took a set of female bonds that served as a network through which to gain employment and to ease adjustment to new work situations, and a sense of sisterhood that provided a collectivist ethos useful to shopfloor organizing. Though we usually think of the home as the dominion of privacy and individualism, in working-class communities, the barriers between home and community were often blurred and housewives collaborated in stretching resources, meeting childcare needs, and determining fair prices and rents.[37] In the factory, women extended their circle of sociability and used it to foster solidarity during walkouts and strikes.

To argue that a female subculture existed within cigar factories is not to argue that women faced men across a chasm of sex antagonism. Indeed, most of the women interviewed organized much of their social lives around workplace acquaintances and first met their husbands through friends at work. Clearly, in the early years of the cigar industry in south Florida, women's culture and workers' culture reinforced one another, especially during moments of labor unrest. And this shared class identity seems to have persisted at least through the last industry-wide strike of 1931. Women, like men, continued to advocate unionization into the 1940s and 50s even as the industry and the union offered fewer and fewer rewards for skilled workers. Those like Dolores Rio, who felt the repercussions of cigar strikes in childhood, were the most adamant in their defense of labor organization. Her advice to "work with the union, work with the union," was echoed, moreover, by all of the women interviewed. The one strike that all of the women were familiar with was the 1931 walkout over union recognition and the removal of the *lector*. Then, Rio recalled, employers and newspaper editors accused the cigarworkers of being "*comunista*"; the workers though ultimately unsuccessful stuck together. And when Mrs. Rio was again accused of being "*comunista*" in the 1950s, she said, "It didn't bother me; they always used that to divide us." [38]

The *lectores* were important to the identity of all cigarmakers. They "read to you, and you heard things from every part of the country," Dolores

Rio reported. "And then we all discussed it." Even when work demanded her full attention, "I hear everybody else talk. That's why they used to say, the cigarmakers, they know everything." One thing the cigarmakers knew in particular was that they were essential to the production process. The *selectores,* nearly all men until the 1950s, often proclaimed that theirs was the most prestigious position. Yet women and men rollers replied, "Let them talk all they want. If we don't make cigars, they don't work." [39] That collectivist ethos among rollers also existed among strippers as evidenced by their threat to stay out of work if they were unhappy with the union settlement in 1921.[40] Such collectivism was employed across the cigar ranks in times of economic crisis. During the Depression, for example, cigarmakers worked "on a limit...We only worked three days or whatever." That way, "everybody earned less, but everybody earned something." [41]

One common male response to earlier economic recessions had been to move to more prosperous regions of the country and wait out the hard times back home. During prolonged strikes in Tampa, male workers might travel to Key West, Havana, or Jacksonville, for instance, sending money home to wives and children. This "travelling fraternity" among cigarmakers was never fully emulated by a travelling sorority, but women did employ job mobility within a more restricted geographical area for their own ends.[42] Rose Anello, Angie Garcia, and Dolores Rio, during their several pregnancies, all worked up to two months before giving birth and frequently returned to work when their babies were only a few weeks old. In an area without pregnancy leave or job security, the large number of factories and the high labor turnover assured women that unpaid leave for childbearing would not become long-term unemployment. As long as women were willing to take a job at the first factory that offered work, they could use job mobility to help integrate their productive and reproductive roles.[43]

As women's and men's use of job mobility indicates, different needs could be met through similar means, thus maintaining a single craft tradition. Or perhaps what these practices illustrate is that even when women and men appear to share craft traditions, they are in fact experiencing quite different realities. Until we know as much about women's experiences in the factory and the union as we know about men's, we cannot determine the extent to which class, race, ethnic or gender consciousness reinforced or inhibited community-wide solidarity. As noted earlier, evidence from other cities and other industries suggests that the resources and strength of women's networks were often employed in aid of class-defined goals.[44]

The evidence gathered so far for south Florida suggests that the industry-wide strikes for which Latin cigarmakers were noted could only be sustained so long as women's resources were put at the service of workers' culture. Community solidarity, which women often cemented, was as important as male leadership in forging union strongholds in south Florida's cigar cities during the early twentieth century. In the waning years of the Clear Havana industry, workers' culture increasingly became women's culture, though by then the opportunities for sustained organization were considerably diminished. Still, the legacy of women's culture for the cigar industry is an important one as women enter the labor force in even larger numbers and as the service sector, where women dominate numerically, becomes the most important new arena for labor organization.

NOTES

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3. Elizabeth Faue, "'The Dynamo of Change': Gender and Solidarity in the American Labour Movement of the 1930s," *Gender & History* 1(Summer 1989):138-58.

4. *Patricia Cooper, Once a Cigarmaker: Men, Women, and Work Culture in American Cigar Factories, 1900-1919* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), chpt. 1.

5. This definition of work culture is taken from Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), p. 228. The classic works on male work culture include David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America: Studies on the History of Work, Technology, and Labor Struggles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) and Herbert G. Gutman, *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976).

6. Benson, *Counter Cultures*, p. 3-4.

7. Commissioner of Labor, *Tenth Annual Report: Strikes and Lockouts*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1894), I:138-47.

8. See, for example, Ardis Cameron, "Bread and Roses Revisited: Women's Culture and Working-Class Activism in the Lawrence Strike of 1912," in Ruth Milkman, ed., *Women, Work and Protest* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985):42-61; Ellen Ross, "Survival Networks: Women's Neighborhood Sharing in London before World War I," *History Workshop* 15(Spring 1983):4-27; Martha Acklesberg, "Women's Collaborative Activities and City Life: Politics and Policy," in Janet A. Flamming, ed., *Political Women: Current Roles in State and Local Government* (Berkeley: Sage Publication, 1984).

9. On women in Cuban cigar factories, see Jean Stubbs, *Tobacco on the Periphery: A Case Study in Cuban Labour History, 1860-1958* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 71, 108; and Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (New York, 1947), 84. On south Florida, see Lisandro Perez, "The Rise and Decline of the Cuban Community in Ybor City, Florida, 1886-1930," unpublished paper, 1983; and U.S. Federal Census abstract for 1890.

10. Silvia Sunshine (Abbie M. Brooks), *Petals Plucked from Sunny Climes*, p. 321.

11. *Tampa Guardian*, May 5, 1886.

12. *Tampa Times*, July 5, 1888.

13. On women in revolutionary efforts, see Joan Marie Steffy, "The Cuban Immigrants of Tampa, Florida, 1886-1898" (M.A. Thesis, University of South Florida, 1975). On changes in women's work patterns and political activism, see Nancy A. Hewitt, "The Voice of Virile Labor': Labor Militancy, Community Solidarity and Gender Identity Among Tampa's Latin Workers," in Ava Baron, ed., *Engendered Work: Toward a New Understanding of Men, Women and Work* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, forthcoming 1991). For statistics on women's labor force participation see U.S. Federal Census abstracts for 1900, 1910, and 1920 and City directories of Tampa for 1893, 1899, and 1901.

14. *Tampa Morning Tribune*, September 5, 1899.

15. On women's role in these strikes see, Hewitt, "'Voice of Virile Labor.'"

16. *El Internacional*, September 1, 1916.

17. *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 27 November 1921 and 26 November 1921.

18. Interview with Dolores Rio, September 4, 1985, and with Rose Anello, August 23, 1985, Tampa, by Nancy A. Hewitt. Mrs. Rio, born in West Tampa in 1909, was of Cuban and Spanish descent. She began her first job at Sanchez y Haya Co. at age 14 and retired at age 65 in 1974. Mrs. Anello, born in Ybor City in 1915, was of Sicilian parentage. She learned cigarmaking at a "buckeye" in 1931 at age 16. She was still working as a hand roller for Arturo Fuentes and Co. in Tampa at the time of the interview.

19. Rio interview, September 4, 1985.

20. Rio interview, September 10, 1985, Tampa, by Hewitt.

21. Rio interview, September 4, 1985; Anello interview, 23 August 1985. A similar account was given by Angie Garcia, interviewed by Hewitt on December 18, 1984, in Tampa.

22. Dolores Rio, Rose Anello, and Angie Garcia all had sisters who worked as strippers. Garcia and Anello also had sisters who were skilled cigarmakers like themselves.

23. Rio interview, September 4, 1985.

24. Garcia interview, December 10, 1984. Mrs. Garcia was born in Ybor City in 1909; her parents were from Sicily. She left school to learn the cigar trade in 1923 to help with family finances and continued to work in cigar factories until her retirement in 1970. She married a Cuban cigarmaker, Mr. Garcia, during the Depression.

25. Anello interview, August 23, 1985.

26. Anello interview, August 23, 1985. The sexual division of labor within the cigar industry was described in detail by both Angie Garcia and Dolores Rio. The latter also discussed other types of jobs available to women in West Tampa and Ybor City during the 1920s and 30s. Garcia, Anello, and Rio had sisters, sisters-in-law, or mothers who at one time worked in these more typical forms of "women's" wage work. For an examination of Italian men's preference for careers in shopkeeping or other forms of self-employment, see Mormino, "'We Worked Hard,'" p. 407

27. Rio experienced this shift in attitudes and choices among Cuban men during her own career as a cigar worker. See Rio interview, September 4, 1985.

28. Rio interview, September 4, 1985.

29. Maria Pescador Interview, September 18, 1985, Tampa, by Hewitt. Pescador worked in Ybor City's cigar factories from the 1930s through the 1950s. She became active in the union and served as a vice-president of the Cigar Makers' International Union local before local workers joined the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union in 1974. She is currently president of RWDSU local 533 in Tampa.

30. Rio interview, September 4, 1985.

31. Buckeyes could also be exploitive, emulating sweatshop conditions experienced by women on other piece work industries, such as the garment trade.

32. Garcia interview, December 18, 1984. See also Rio interview, September 4, 1985; and interview with Philip and Helen Spoto by Gary Mormino, June 30, 1979, in the University of Florida Oral History Project. Rio and Spoto were taught to roll cigars by an aunt and older sister, respectively.

33. Garcia interview, December 14, 1984.

34. On ethnic tensions, see Anello interview, August 23, 1985 and Rio interview, September 4, 1985. Despite discussions of ethnic and racial differences, both women also claimed that all women were generally friendly with others across race and ethnic lines. Indeed, many Italian and Cuban women learned Spanish and Italian from each other in order to improve communication and create closer friendships in the workplace.

35. Garcia interview, December 4, 1984. See also, Anello interview, August 23,1985, and Spotos' interview, June 30, 1979, on importance and extent of mother's work.

36. Rio interview, September 5, 1985. The parallels she draws with frontier life are made clear by comparing her statements with John Mack Faragher's "The Midwestern Farm Family, 1850" (In Linda K. Kerber and Jane DeHart Mathews, eds., *Women's America: Refocusing the Past*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1982, pp. 114-129.)

37. For an excellent example of these same practices in another setting, see Ellen Ross, "Survival Networks."

38. Rio Interview, September 4, 1985. On advocacy of unions, see also interviews with Anello, Garcia, Pescador, and Spoto cited above and interview with Mrs. Francis Tagliarini by Gary Mormino, 1982, University of Florida Oral History Project.

39. Rio interview, September 4, 1985.

40. *Tampa Times*, November 26, 1921.

41. Rio interview, September 4, 1985.

42. On the "travelling fraternity," see Patricia Cooper, *Once a Cigarmaker*, chpt. 3.

43. See interview with Rio, Garcia, and Anello cited above. Anello also used this type of mobility to continue her work as a handroller whenever machines were introduced into the factory in which she was working.

44. For examples, see Ross, "Survival Networks"; Ardis Cameron, "Bread and Roses Revisited," Paula Hyman, "Immigrant Women and Consumer Protest: The New York City Kosher Meat Boycott of 1902," *American Jewish History* 71(September 1980):91-105 and Martha Ackelsberg, "Women's Collaborative Activities and City Life."

ORGANIZING FISHERMEN IN FLORIDA IN THE 1930s AND 1940s

BEN GREEN

Ben Green is a free-lance writer and the author of a book entitled, **The Finest Kind: A Celebration of a Florida Fishing Village.** *He has taught high school social studies and English; he's worked for the Florida Education Association United as a communications organizer and he's worked as a staff member of the Florida AFL-CIO where for three years he did humanities programming on a statewide basis through a special FEH grant.*

Let me just start off by telling you a little bit about Cortez. It's a little village in Manatee County, about seven miles west of Bradenton. In fact, if you leave Bradenton, you go on the Cortez Road towards the Gulf--heading towards Anna Maria Island, which most people today probably think is Cortez. In those seven miles there's the Cortez Laundromat and Cortez Shopping Center and Cortez Winn-Dixie, or whatever, and none of it is Cortez. All that's actually Cortez is just this little tiny place. Just before you go across the bridge to Anna Maria [Island], there's a little tiny sign, you take a left and all of a sudden you're back in time about a hundred years ago. There are about five blocks of shell streets and little cracker houses and fish houses and it's a community that's been there for a hundred years.

All the people there are related to each other. They're all related to me, one way or the other. My great grandfather and his two brothers came down from North Carolina in the 1880s and then after they got there some other relatives, cousins and in-laws came down and, so not only do you have a community that's been there for a hundred years, which in Florida is a long time, but you also have this family structure. Everybody is related to everybody, either by blood or marriage and sometimes by both. And so labor history in a little place like this has a unique kind of characteristic. On the one hand there is probably a cooperation because the people you are organizing against, the owners of the fish houses, aren't John D. Rockefeller or the chairman of the board of General Motors. The fish house owner might be your uncle, or your first cousin, or your father and that's who you were organizing against and going on strike against. So on one hand, I found there was real cooperation when people talked about labor history. On the other hand it's family feud. And so when the bitterness broke out, you have the bitterness that you really only get in a family feud and it lends a real colorful characteristic to it.

Cortez is not only a teeny little place--there's only about 500 people there--but it is also a major fishery. It's a tiny place with everybody right there together, but it's got Sarasota Bay and the Gulf of Mexico right out its door and it's actually been a major fishery since the 1870s. I did some research which showed that prior to Anglos even settling there, fishermen from Cuba and Key West, Spanish fishermen, were fishing the area. Since the 1930s it's been the second largest mullet fishery in the state of Florida. And mullet still today is the biggest commercial catch in the state.

The second thing I want to tell you about this whole labor history of fishermen's unions is that I discovered it completely by accident. I came in to Cortez working on this book. I'd been there probably two or three months doing research and I assumed, as a Floridian growing up spending every summer in Cortez, that there was no labor history in Cortez. In fact, I thought about how sad it was that there wasn't. I was on staff at the AFL-CIO at the time, and I thought, "Why didn't they ever join a union?" Here they are, they're isolated, they're independent; out there on the boat, you against the elements. But I thought about how sad it was that they were so isolated--that they'd never joined a union. Since 1967 they've had the Organized Fishermen of Florida, which is still existing today, but it's not really a union, it's an independent association. They do a lot of lobbying in Tallahassee.

So anyway, the way this happened, is a funny kind of story. I went to see one of my old cousins who's now in his 70s and I took my girlfriend at the time. She'd come down there--I was down there doing research--and I wanted her to meet some of my family, so we went over to see my old cousin, Gene Fulford. And I took her in and I introduced her. I said, "Gene, this is my girlfriend, Ann, and she's down here wanting to meet some people," and he looked up at me and he said, "You gonna marry the girl?" I said, "Well, you know, we're talking about it some. But we haven't really decided." So he looked at her and he said, "Well, before you decide to marry this boy, do you know how cheap he is? Do you know what a tightwad he is?" And she said, "Well, no." So he proceeded to start telling her. And he started going on and on about, "He was so cheap he'd come down here every summer and you couldn't even get--he wouldn't even buy a honeybun. He was so cheap." Which was true. I wouldn't buy a honeybun.

All my relatives--I was getting paid $10 a week--from the time I was about eight or nine years old, and two or three times a day, all my cousins and uncles and all, we'd be back home, we'd have to be bailing boats or painting dowels, or something, two or three times a day we'd all take off and go to the store because that was a way to get out of working and hiding from my grandpa. And so they would all be buying honeybuns and RC Colas and Moon Pies and ice cream sandwiches and, well, you make two, three trips a day to the store, $10 a week doesn't go too far. I was saving my money and my grandpa Green had given me a wallet and told me to go down to Cortez and, "You get $16, son, you can buy yourself a $25 savings bond," so I was saving my money. I wasn't going to spend it on honeybuns.

Anyway, he gets through ranting and raving about honeybuns and how I wouldn't ever buy one and I said, "Well Gene, you know, I was just glad when I finally got to be thirteen, I got a full share and I knew I was a man then because I got a full share." And he said, "Well now, that always bothered me, I always complained to Tink [my grandpa] how some young punk like you still eating the pablum, comes down here and he's making the same amount of money I'm making; I been fishing forty years. And you guys get on the boat, go to bed, soon as the boat left." As soon as the boat left the dock, we'd all go to sleep and Gene would stay up and fish. And I said, "Well, you know I never thought of that. Here you've been fishing for forty years and you make the same money we made." We'd catch a load of fish and I'd get a share and he'd get a share. And I said," Did you ever talk about that? Did anybody complain about it?" And he said, "Well, yeah, the union tried to do something about it, but it didn't work." And I said, "The what?" And he said, "Well, the union, they tried to do something about it, you know, having a wage share, it never worked." And that was how it started.

I had no idea there had ever been a union. I assumed just the opposite, that there had never been one. And so we started talking and he said, "Well, go talk to Earl, he'll tell you. Talk to Bob Knowlton." And it totally blew my mind. For the next week, everybody I went to just started telling me, "Well, yeah, back in the 30s we'd--" and there was this incredible rich labor history that--I had been sort of romantically inspired by what coal miners were doing and what the textile workers were doing. And here within my own family was this labor history that I never knew about and probably never would have known about, you know, if I had bought that honeybun. If I had bought that honeybun, he would probably never have told that story.

How many other Gene Fulfords are out there in the state of Florida. You know, how many other stories of labor history are sitting out there waiting for somebody to stumble into. I was very impressed with what the first speaker said about the richness that's out there. I think it's an untapped resource that we haven't even begun to skim the surface of. And I told Peggy before I came down here, almost everybody in Cortez who was involved in union organizing is dead. I mean they died just since I wrote the book. Gene's still alive just because he's such a tightwad. He won't ever kick the bucket, but everybody else who was involved in it has died just in the last five years. And if I hadn't written that--hadn't gone back then--it would have never happened. He would have told me the stories and nobody would have been left to trace it down. So I would really echo the call to get out and find out what's really there.

Here's what I found. There were really three periods of labor, or union history, in the state of Florida that I could identify for fishermen on the Gulf Coast in particular. One was in the 1930s, from 1938 to 1945 when they were affiliated with the Seafarers' International Union. And then in the 1950s--actually the title of my talk should extend into the 50s--from 1952 to 57 they were affiliated with the United Packinghouse Workers of America and then as I mentioned earlier, from 1967 on they've been--there's been OFF, Organized Fishermen of Florida, which really isn't a union, but it's an association.

The first real labor strike of any type that I could find out about happened prior to the affiliation with the Seafarers', which was in 1932. The height of the Depression, and this is a point where for years in Cortez, anyway, fishermen made a cent a pound for mullet. That was the going price. You got a cent a pound. You have to catch a lot of mullet at a cent a pound to make any money. Well, finally by 1932 they had gotten the price up to a cent and a half a pound. Which was a big breakthrough and in 1932 at the height of the silver mullet season which is in the spring of the year, the dealers in Cortez cut them back to a cent a pound. And there hadn't been a union, but other people around the country were forming unions and so the fishermen in Cortez got together and formed a union. And rather than me telling you the story of this strike, I'm going to read you just a paragraph here and this is one of the people that Gene told me to go talk to, named Earl Guthrie, who has since died, who was one of the greatest storytellers in Cortez. And I'm just going to read you his description of the first strike.

"We all got together and formed a union and set a date for a strike if they didn't go back up on the price." And then on the morning when it was scheduled, all the fishermen met down in front of the little store in Cortez. The one I wouldn't buy honeybuns at. And they all met down there and here's Earl's description of it. He says, "Practically everybody in Cortez was up there that morning. There was a flagpole down there in front of the store and one guy said, 'Let's put the flag up.'" Which I think was a great example of them -- maybe some lessons the labor movement today needs to learn, is how to wrap ourselves in the flag instead of always being identified as anti- or un-American and communist. They immediately said we're gonna appropriate the flag on our side. They said, "Let's put the flag up. Another fella said, 'By God, I'll go up there and put it up.' And by golly, he went up that flagpole just like a cat. We run the American flag up and we said to the dealers, 'When you put the price back up, we'll take the flag down and go back to work. Until you get right and give us the price we're asking, we'll sit right here from now on.'

"Well, everybody was sore at each other, the fishermen and the dealers. And the dealers thought we'd go back to work in a couple of days. But we didn't! We sat right there! We'd gather up in that big lot every morning and sit around and play cards and cut the fool and had a good time. They didn't think we was as bullheaded as we was. I don't remember how many days we sat there, but finally they said, 'Well, boys we'll go it!' So we took the flag down and went back to work." (Green, p. 173)

So that was the first strike in Cortez. That was the impromptu militancy, really, you know, they said we're not going to go for this, and they formed a little union. As is typical of a lot of situations, it didn't last. The strike was successful but the union faded out. People went back to work and it died out. And over the next five or six years they realized that unless there was some kind of statewide union, nothing was going to work because various ports, different ports, paid different prices. Cortez, because they were strong, because there were a lot of fishermen, because they were all related to the dealers, tended to usually pay a higher price than Fort Myers or Osprey, or Homassasa, or up and down the coast.

So finally, in 1938, the Seafarers' sent an organizer named Biggs, which was all anybody could remember about him. I went back to the Seafarers' to talk to people there, and they couldn't hunt up a name on him. He came in to Cortez in 1938. They established the local and, he actually made a guy there in Cortez named Bob Knowlton the business manager. This is an interesting story, particularly for labor history in South Florida. Bob was from Michigan. He had moved from Michigan down to Cortez in 1922. He'd been a railroad man in Michigan, been there when they got the union, and he came to Florida. He was probably the first Yankee transplant who came to Florida and helped build the labor movement. When he came down he could say to the guys, "Hey, well, we got the union in. They cut the workday from sixteen hours to eight hours. This is a good thing!" So, he became the business manager of the Seafarers' local. Biggs then went to other places and established more locals. Although I was not able to document membership size through the Seafarers' records, a number of different people estimated that membership in the Seafarers' eventually got up as high as 6,000. For the Seafarers', their main strategy, the big thing they wanted was a standard price for fish. That was the big issue. Every port was to pay the same amount. They were never really able to do this--but they tried. There'd be little strikes in different places, one, two day strikes. The first major strike that happened in Cortez after that, was in 1945 at the end of the war, part of the wave of postwar strikes all over the country.

Nineteen forty-five was the biggest year for mullet production in the history of the state of Florida. A total of 55 million pounds of mullet produced in 1945 compared with 1977, the last year the federal government kept track of it, when 21 million pounds were produced. So, they were catching a lot of fish. And the interesting thing in Cortez is about forty-eight Cortez boys went off to the war and when they came back, the fishermen who were there were already on strike, and, as Earl tells the story, there was some resentment when the servicemen got back there. According to Earl, the dealers were all convinced that as soon as these guys, the veterans, got back the strike would be over. So they were just kind of holding out refusing to negotiate. Here is Earl's version of what happened. "The dealers all said when them boys get home from overseas, there won't be no damn union. And when some of the boys got home they were sore as the devil with us guys. We called a little meeting one night and some of them said, 'By God, we been over yonder fighting a war and you fellas have been home sitting on your ass on strike.' I said, 'Fellas, just wait, Let's get something straight here. We were fighting for your interest, so you'd have something when you came back. And you was making as much in the service as we was here. We sure were not making anything here.' Well, they saw it was so, and from then on the dealers didn't get any help from the servicemen." In fact, he goes on to say, that the servicemen, once they got into the thing, wanted their own union because they had decided, the guys who stayed home, they were not tough enough, and were not asking for enough. There was even a point when they were going to have their union. Well, they won that strike in Cortez, but again the same thing happened. The biggest problem that fishermen had on the Gulf Coast was this playing one port against the other, and that's what really led to the collapse of the Seafarers' in 1945.

I said earlier that Cortez is the second biggest fishery in the state. The biggest fishery in the state is Fort Myers and there is a very interesting contrast here, both geographically and in terms of family. If you think about Fort Myers Beach, it's strung out along this long peninsula; really, this little narrow peninsula. And there are several different communities there, and throughout the labor history I was able to dig up, Fort Myers Beach was always the weak link in the union struggle. They were the biggest fishery, but they were geographically strung out; the people were separated; and the families weren't related to each other. There wasn't that cohesiveness, the kind of natural affinity that there was in Cortez where everybody lived within five blocks of each other and saw each other everyday. So, what happened with the Seafarers' is, Cortez won their strike, but didn't win in Fort Myers, and pretty soon Fort Myers was undercutting the price they were paying in Cortez and the whole thing went down the tubes.

From 1945 until 1952, there was no union in the state. Then the Packinghouse Workers came in, and were the most successful union, but basically what happened to them was the same as with the Seafarers'. The Packinghouse Workers actually achieved the standard price for fish in about 1956. What blew that apart as well, was another strike in Fort Myers Beach which went on for about six weeks. A couple of fishermen there would not honor the strike and the dealers finally broke the strike. Once again Fort Myers went down the tubes, the dealers in other cities cut their prices and the Packinghouse Workers went down to defeat.

The final thing I want to do is read you the quote from Bob Knowlton, who became the business agent for the Packinghouse Workers. I asked him if he regretted all the years he spent trying to build a union, and he said, "no" but the last time when the Packinghouse Workers went down was it for him. He feels no bitterness about the years he put into the union, only sadness. He has too many years of his life wrapped up in the labor movement to turn loose of it completely and there are memories of those years that he is still attached to, like the time he met John L. Lewis in Fort Myers. When all is said and done, those memories remind Bob Knowlton of what could have been. As Knowlton put it, "John L. Lewis had a house down in Fort Myers and I met him one time and talked to him for quite a while. He was just the nicest guy you'd ever talk to. Well, look at all he did for the miners." Knowlton shook his head slowly, shrugged and said, "We could have had all that, too, if we'd stuck together." (Green p. 185) That statement is a kind of summary of the fate of fishermen's unions in Florida.

Material for this presentation was drawn from Green's, ***Finest Kind: A Celebration of A Florida Fishing Village*** (Mercer University Press).

FARMWORKERS AND FARMWORKERS' UNIONS IN FLORIDA

D. MARSHALL BARRY, Ph.D.

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There are several reasons which justify a close inspection of the history of the transformation of farmworker organizations into labor unions in the State of Florida. It is clear to this observer that the history of Florida's farmworkers is more than a sub-chapter of the efforts of California-based unions to organize agricultural workers. However, such efforts in Florida have been relegated to the status of footnotes in major works pertaining to the subject.[1]

Florida's farmworkers have their own history although it is similar in many ways to the more publicized California history. For example, Florida has had farmworker unions and unionization for at least the last sixty years. The United Citrus Workers of Florida claimed a membership of between sixteen and twenty thousand in the citrus groves of Central Florida in 1933. They engaged in strikes and some contracts affecting wages and working conditions here in Florida during the depression.

The United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America (U.C.A.P.A.W.A.) also organized in the 1930's in citrus.[2] The Food and Tobacco Workers Union of the C.I.O. organized in citrus after World War II in the same area of the state. We are particularly fortunate to have Harvey Baker living in Florida who kept a copy of everything he mimeographed for the F.T.W.U. during that period. These historical documents evidence the same powerlessness and poverty that are faced by most farmworkers today in the state. For example, he showed me a flier in which the union was pointing out to the workers the ability of the companies to pay five cents more per box of oranges. It noted that the companies paid this five cent increase when it was raining in order to keep the workers picking during inclement weather. With the use of a rhetorical question the union asked how the packinghouse could tell the difference between oranges picked during the rain and when it was sunny. Clearly, if there was an extra nickel available when it was raining to pay the workers, that nickel was still available when the rain stopped.

Unmentioned in major histories of farm labor organizing is the major contribution by Florida to progress of the more publicized unions. The AFL-CIO granted a charter for agricultural workers to the United Farm Workers of America and elevated it from the status of an Organizing Committee because of the signing of the Coca-Cola contract in Florida in 1972. Cesar Chavez acknowledged this important contribution by Florida when he met with Florida farmworker leaders in Lantana the day before the signing of the Coca-Cola contract in Miami. Without this east coast contract covering nearly 1,400 farmworkers, there was insufficient evidence that the UFWOC could represent farmworkers on a national and multi-ethnic basis.

In an attempt to fill, at least in part, this void in the written record of the history of the organization of Florida's farmworkers, I am going to discuss the following items: the commitment of Florida's farmworkers to labor unions and unionization; the "best" working conditions, i.e. the *status quo*, faced by farmworkers in Florida in 1970 at the Minute Maid subsidiary of the Coca-Cola Corporation, and the failure of farmworkers to grasp the social goals of unionization and the conscious strategy of the United Farm Workers (AFL-CIO) in worker re-education; H.P. Hood as an example of farmworker commitment to unionization, union-busting, and failure; the economic costs to farmworkers in Florida resulting from the absence of a grievance procedure and collective bargaining agreement.

The extent to which Florida's farmworkers in 1971 were committed to labor unions as the vehicle to achieve economic justice is evidenced best by a description of the process of organization of the Coca-Cola workers in Florida. Within six weeks of their arrival in Florida and the initiation of the drive to unionize Minute Maid, Manuel Chavez (Cesar's cousin) accompanied by six Chicano organizers from California signed up 76 percent of Coca-Cola's workforce of approximately 1,400 workers. Moreover, these workers were predominately Black, native-born American workers who were dispersed over 30,000 acres of citrus groves owned by the company in 12 counties within the state.[3] The ethnicity of the farmworkers in the bargaining unit is, perhaps, best evidenced by the composition of the bargaining team which was elected by the workers' committees in various areas and job classifications: there were no Chicano, Mexican, or Latin American workers elected - only domestic Blacks and Whites.

In spite of the prevailing employer practice which existed in 1971 of separating farmworkers by segregation of crews and discrimination in job classification eligibility, Florida workers were eager to join a labor union regardless of the ethnicity of that union's representatives or the absence of prior experience either within the state or in the crop of citrus in which the Florida workers were employed. The "conventional wisdom" that Florida employers segregated farmworkers in their employ because the workers wished to be separated and in order to ensure labor peace was refuted by the rapidity of worker acceptance of the union in the organizing drive given the ethnic diversity discussed above. While institutionalized segregation was advantageous to the employer in minimizing labor costs, it clearly was not perceived as advantageous by the farmworkers themselves.

One example of the desire by Florida's farmworkers to join a union was provided by an episode which occurred in Lake County in 1971. I had the opportunity to observe this event because of concern over the level of violence against Blacks within the county and the belief that confrontations would be minimized by presence of White observers. As a result, several of my students from New College and I were acting as observers for the Florida Christian Migrant Ministry in Lake County as the California organizers of the UFWOC attempted to obtain union authorization cards from farmworkers employed by the Coca-Cola Corporation to harvest citrus on its groves.

This event occurred in a rural area of Lake County where the company's grove bordered an unsurfaced public road. The Lake County Sheriff Deputies had parked their squad cars with flashing lights as a barrier on the edge of the road between the workers in the grove and the organizers on the public road. The organizers were prevented from gaining access to the private property by the Deputy Sheriffs under threat of arrest for trespassing. However, the Black farmworkers responded to the call of the Chicano organizers by crossing through the barricade of squad cars and standing in line to sign cards authorizing the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee to be their representative in collective bargaining with the Coca-Cola/Minute Maid Corporation. Given the history of violence against minorities in that county, this event attests to the strength of the desire for a union by these workers as much as the simple fact that 76 percent of the workforce of the company was signed up in only six weeks.

In light of this remarkable speed of "organizing" the workforce of Minute Maid, it is important to note that this employer was probably the best and most enlightened employer of farmworkers in Florida at that time. The relative standard of the terms "best" and "enlightened" is evidenced by the NBC TV "White Paper" on the plight of Florida's farmworkers in 1970. In fact, because of the size and profitability of Minute Maid, NBC had singled out this company's working conditions in its documentary of the plight of farmworkers within the state. By 1972 when the union concluded its collective bargaining contract, conditions within the company had not improved significantly in spite of its agricultural workers' project developed in response to the NBC exposure.

In 1971, while many farm workers for Minute Maid had been placed on the company's payroll, many still were employed on a daily basis. In fact, when such workers were approached by union organizers because they were picking citrus on land owned by Coca-Cola, these pickers did not know that they were working for that company at the time. Clearly these workers were not considered employees by the company nor were they benefiting from the programs instituted by the company after the adverse publicity of the NBC "White Paper."

In 1971, picking crews of this "best" employer were segregated on the basis of race. As an economist, I was equally impressed with the functional benefit to the company of this reality as I was offended by the violation of Judeo-Christian principles of egalitarianism of this practice. Racial segregation was exploited by the company by using one race against another to create disunity among the workforce with the objective of driving down the labor costs in harvesting its citrus crop. For example, citrus pickers work on a piece rate basis, and this rate is determined by bargaining on a grove-by-grove basis. Depending on the conditions of the groves, the workers will not commence working until they believe that they have an agreement to be remunerated at a rate which is sufficiently high to compensate them for increased difficulty due to conditions such as sparse fruit, small fruit size, height of trees, intertwined trees, poorly maintained groves, etc. In short, the fruit harvester normally bargains - even in the absence of a union - to raise the rate quoted at the shape-up market prior to the viewing of the grove so that the amount he/she can expect to earn for a day's work will match the current prevailing wages for the area. It is not uncommon for workers to halt picking at one rate and to bargain for a higher rate when they reach another part of a grove where picking conditions are less favorable. When workers fail to receive what they consider to be a "fair" piece rate, it was not uncommon for them to withhold their labor in hopes of raising the rate to an equitable level.

The functional nature of segregated crews is clarified by examining the common company response in 1971 to such a piece rate dispute. If the crew refusing to accept the rate offered by the company was a Black crew, it would be replaced by the company with a Chicano or White crew. The displaced Black workers identified the new crew as the villain and became a ready candidate to be used to break a similar protest over the offered piece rate by a Chicano or White crew. In such a way, the company was the winner in keeping its labor costs low by playing one group of workers against the other to the mutual disadvantage of both.

In all fairness to the non-agricultural sector, this game did not originate with agriculture in Florida. It had been a successful tactic to fight worker unionization by emphasizing their different racial and ethnic characteristics long before Florida became a major agricultural employer. For example, it was not uncommon for management to start the rumor among its White, segregated workforce that the union would replace them with Black employees. Similarly, it was not uncommon for nonunion companies with minority employees to argue that the union would replace them with White workers were it successful in its organizing drive. Even though it cannot claim originality, Florida agribusinesses segregated the workforce and used this practice to reduce the incomes of all farmworkers. The Coca-Cola company also segregated its limited housing units. In addition, management promotions and eligibility for the higher paying hourly position of "mechanic" were not open to Blacks prior to the UFW contract.

A few of the other conditions which existed at Minute Maid and which were remedied by the United Farm Workers contract in 1972 were:

1. Children were allowed to work in Minute Maid groves in the dangerous activity of harvesting fruit. While they were not on the official payroll of the company, they assisted their families in their collective attempts to earn a living wage.
2. There were no protections such as routine tests and minimum grove re-entry delays after the application of dangerous pesticides for grove workers. For example, the driver of a spray rig was not enclosed in an air-tight cab when applying such pesticides. As a result, the worker would often be engulfed in the spray for long periods of time without subsequent testing for toxic reactions.
3. There was no grievance procedure whereby a worker could appeal the merits of a disciplinary action by the company to an outside, neutral party. Minute Maid was an "employment at will" employer with sole discretion over hiring, retention, promotion, and firing before the union contract. Workers could be replaced for any reason, including the availability of a new workforce of refugees and undocumented aliens who would work for lower remuneration.
4. There was no health insurance, retirement, sick leave, paid holidays and vacations, or other fringe benefits which workers in the non-agricultural workforce - whether unionized or not - generally receive.
5. Workers were not paid for breakdown time. If the bus transporting them to a distant grove broke down, they were not

reimbursed for income lost even if they were not returned to their base until the end of the workday. Piece rate workers were never paid except for the quantity of fruit they harvested. If management error or equipment breakdown prevented farmworkers from working, they suffered the penalty in lost wages.

6. The company utilized the existence of an excess supply of labor by promoting policies which failed to create worker loyalty and workforce stability. Prior to the union, the company experienced a turnover rate among harvesters of five for every slot required in one season. This continual turnover allowed the company to lower its wage bill by exploiting the entering workforce of Mexican workers whose next best opportunity wage in their homeland was considerably lower than that offered in Florida. While the company had few Hispanic workers, the threat of displacement was sufficient to exert the desired downward pressure on the wages of domestic workers.

7. There were no drinking cups, hand washing facilities, or toilets in the Minute Maid groves where the workers were picking.

It is important to note that there was no economic rationale for the wages and working conditions of farmworkers in Florida except the powerlessness of these workers. For example, in 1969 the net income, i.e. the profit to all farm owners in Florida after the payment of all operating costs including depreciation, was 33.84 percent of cash receipts from marketing plus government payments to growers.[3] This above-average profit rate answers the question of why predominately non-agricultural corporations such as Coca-Cola have decided to enter agricultural production in significant numbers. Since citrus was one of the most profitable crops in Florida at the time and since Minute Maid was the most profitable citrus producer/processor in the state due to its national advertising, label, and price upcharge, it is to be expected that its rate of profit exceeded the state's average for all crops and livestock production.

While Coca-Cola was the profit leader in the industry, it did not utilize this higher ability to pay to increase the remuneration of the farmworkers who harvested its citrus. Although the major influx of Mexican and Caribbean workers occurred in the post-1975 period, there was still an excess supply of farmworkers in Florida in 1970-71. While there was an upward pressure on the prices of other factor inputs, there was a downward pressure on the real costs of labor. As a result labor was not as highly valued by the producers as were the more expensive inputs. A farmworker could easily be replaced at the same or lower real cost while a tractor, "goat", or other capital input was increasing in both absolute and real cost and, as a result, more expensive to replace. This relative cheapness and excess supply led to the prevailing working conditions described above at the "best" employer for such workers.

Examples of the initial failure of rank and file farmworkers to understand the social objectives of unionization are numerous. To be truthful, I failed to grasp such objectives even though I had been involved in the economic research, the negotiations, and the ratification process. An important part of my continuing education came after the ratification by the workers of the collective bargaining agreement when

Mack Lyons, the director of the hiring halls and the contract administrator, stated that getting the contract in some ways was the worst thing that might have happened to staff. Now the hard work would commence and it was the job of the union to organize the workers into a union. He stated that the workers had often joined the union for selfish, self-centered reasons generally motivated by economic gain. Everyone was looking at the contract from the point of view of what it would mean to his/her pocketbook and not from the perspective of the union as the mechanism for the collective empowerment of farmworkers.

The failure of the workforce at Coca-Cola to comprehend the full scope of the word "union" was evidenced by several occurrences in 1971 and 1972 during the initial organization, collective bargaining, and operation under the new contract. For example, the racial composition of the initial bargaining team evidenced the extent to which the workers had accepted the racial divisions which had been fostered by the company's policies of segregation discussed above. The bargaining team was chosen in democratic elections by the farmworkers in a manner which ensured that all geographical areas and job functions would be represented according to their approximate job numbers. Only White and Black males were elected by the workers as representatives. While Chicanos had provided the resources and organizers for Coca-Cola workers, the only member of the negotiating team who was Mexican-American was the director of the Florida effort, Manuel Chavez.

The most overt example of this friction between ethnic groups occurred during negotiations with the company - an event which the company's negotiators attempted to utilize to break the team "discipline" of the union at the bargaining table. At one point when the hourly rates of pay, minimum workweek guarantee, night shift differential, overtime provisions, provision of tools, and other contract areas affecting equipment operators, mechanics, and other hourly workers were being discussed, one of the Black representatives of the harvesters rose from the table and objected to the wasting of time on matters of no interest to him or those he represented. In a classic example of textbook bargaining strategy, the company began to talk to that worker directly, in an attempt to split the union's team and to undermine the chief negotiator. A union caucus achieved a truce, but did not cure the divisions along racial lines.

After the contract with Coke was signed, the need for worker re-education and consciousness-raising was directly addressed by the union leadership. The national union had assigned Mack and Diana Lyons to move to Florida to ensure the success of the contract at Coca-Cola. Mack's primary responsibility was to ensure the efficient functioning of the new collective bargaining contract. Diana's primary responsibility was the organization of support groups statewide both for assistance in fighting legislative efforts to restrain or destroy the fledgling union by the various farm lobbies and for mobilization of financial support from the non-farmworker community.

Of course, there were no "job descriptions" for Mack and Diana which restricted them from any activity in furtherance of the union. Diana, for example, provided English/Spanish translations at worker meetings so that the barrier of language could be broken. As co-director for the state, she also assisted in changing sex stereotypes and attitudes regarding the "proper role" for women commonly held by males, including male farmworkers.

Another important covert impact by Mack and Diana on the furtherance of the full concept of "union" attacked the racial divisiveness which had been fostered by the company. Mack was a Black American who left farm work to work full time for the union. Diana was a White American who had also been a farmworker before working for the union. Both earned a subsistence wage consisting of living expenses and $5.00 per week. The workers, thanks to the union contract, were earning more money than ever before in their lives. The drive, commitment, and toil by Mack and Diana for so little remuneration was probably the most significant message to the workers on the true meaning of the word "union."

From the beginning all union activities were designed to destroy the barriers to a union which had been established by the employer. Meetings were held in the languages of the workers with simultaneous translations to allow workers to communicate and participate regardless of racial or ethnic background. The union established a system of stewards who represented the workers on the job site in disputes with management. More important, these stewards were the mechanism to educate the membership on the terms and conditions of their contract. Since these workers were accustomed to an "employment at will" environment, they had to be schooled in the meaning and operation of contractual protections such as payment for breakdown time, the accurate reporting of hours for full payment of health and pension benefits by the company, control over the use of pesticides, use of paid sick leave, the grievance procedure to resolve disputes in a peaceful manner, among others. They also had to be educated on worker responsibilities under the contract and the importance of the contract's success.

Initially, the workers took the problems to their stewards for resolution and contract enforcement. The stewards then attempted to dump these problems on Mack Lyons. However, Mack insisted that the responsibility for contract enforcement rested with the workers themselves. The revolutionary nature of individual farmworker empowerment and responsibility can only be fully appreciated by those who understand the dependency and powerlessness of the *status quo* inherited by the union and which still exists for other farmworkers in Florida today.

When a steward brought a contract violation or problem to Mack, he normally responded by asking what the steward planned to do about it. At first, the response by the steward was a variation of the following: "that's the union's job" or "that's what we pay dues to have you do for us." However, Mack trained the workers to band together to solve their problems by refusing to solve difficulties for them. This is not to infer that Mack did not provide ideas or encouragement to the stewards and the workers in conflict resolution. However, as an organizer it was important to him that the workers be empowered and that they consider the contract their responsibility.

Of course, given the potential number of problems which could have been generated by 1,400 workers and the single staff person to administer the contract, this forcing the workers to solve their problems was a functional necessity. However, the major gain from the successes which were conceived and carried out by the workers themselves was the awareness that they had power if they worked together. They did not need the union as a replacement for the prior paternalism of the company. They were the union and it was only as strong as they were.

Since the union contract required the company to cease all job discrimination and to hire through a non-discriminatory hiring hall run by the union, the racial crews and job classification barriers disappeared. Whenever an opening occurred, the company was required to request a replacement from the union. The union filled the position with the next worker on the list of qualified workers. The order of listing was determined strictly on the basis of the length of time a worker had been waiting to be employed at the hiring hall. As a result, all picking crews and hourly positions were integrated as this mechanism began to function. Because of Mack's policy of making the workers solve their own problems within the contract, farmworkers of all ethnic groups and both sexes were forced, for the first time, to work together for their mutual benefit. The advantages of the union became apparent to all over time.

The unification of farmworkers into a union was assisted by the existence of a strong grievance procedure in the union contract. Piece rate disputes were always a normal part of daily employment for farmworkers before the union. Picking crews argued for higher rates based on adverse picking conditions which were discovered when they arrived at the grove. However, given the excess supply of labor, the power always lay with the employer. Rate increases could be granted, but the decision was management controlled. It was not unusual for pickers to be "fired" and abandoned in rural areas without transportation or other employment because they refused to accept the final piece rate set by the employer. While there is no concrete documentation, it was a belief among farmworkers that if you argued too adamantly over piece rates, you would be blacklisted and unable to find employment in that local area and crop.

For the first time, the union contract equalized the power of the harvesters in piece rate disputes with the company. As picking crews became integrated with the use of the union hiring hall as the source of workers, so were these piece rate disputes. Black, White, and Chicano workers had to work together on a crew to increase the rates paid for their work. Moreover, the union provided an information system whereby groves which were experiencing piece rate disputes were identified and all crews were notified of the dispute. The company could no longer play one crew or ethnic group against another with the goal of reducing labor costs. These piece rate disputes and the existence of a grievance procedure were perhaps the most important ingredients of the union's worker re-education process.

One of the best examples of this process of unification resulted from a complaint by the piece rate workers that they were not being paid for all of the oranges which they picked. Although piece rates were set in the verbal work contract for a field box of oranges (for example 40 cents per box), the workers normally picked into a tub which was approximately ten times the cubic capacity of the field box. At a contract price of 40 cents per box, farmworkers would be credited with 10 boxes picked and paid $4.00 for every full tub of oranges. However, they were required to fill each tub until it was rounded in a heap above the edge of the rim in order to have a tub be considered "full" by Minute Maid field management. The "loaders" were directed not to empty a tub until it met this requirement of fullness and not to credit the picker with 10 boxes picked until this rounded-off condition was met.

In fact, it was this directive to the loaders which provided the control and enforcement of the company's standard of fullness. Since each worker was given only two empty tubs at the start of each workday, he/she had to fill each tub to the rounded level in order to be given additional empty tubs to fill. Failure to meet the required level would mean that a picker would be able to earn less than 20 boxes of piece rate for the day's work. At 40 cents per box, such a worker would earn less than $8.00 a day even with the union contract unless he/she filled the tubs to the prescribed "fullness". To the union workers it was clear that the recently gained increases in the collective bargaining contract could be eroded by the company merely by requiring more "rounding-off", i.e. more oranges, in each tub.

After much discussion at the crew level and in regional meetings, the complaining workers decided to grieve this condition under their contract and sent a formal filing of the grievance to the company on April 9, 1972. Teams of workers using field boxes and tubs, accompanied by Mack Lyons and union organizer Paul Pumphrey, conducted trials in the groves for their fellow workers to witness. In their collective opinion, workers were picking up to 2 and one half boxes (or 25%) for free for every tub filled to the level required by the company.

The company's response to the filing of the grievance indicated some possible acceptance of the validity of the workers' belief that more than 10 field boxes were being picked in each tub under the "rounded-off" standard of "full." As stated in the "Opinion of the Arbitrator" for the hearing:[4]

> There was a short period after the grievance was filed that the workers were given credit for 11 field boxes for each tub, for approximately 2 weeks, after which this new practice was discontinued. The Company's position on this short-lived change in compensation was that it had been ordered and directed by a Union Steward and not by Company supervisory personnel.

To anyone familiar with the company's absolute control over the payroll process and the cutting of payroll checks, the idea that a single farmworker steward could unilaterally control the rate of pay by declaration would be absurd.

The hearings on this "full tub definition" grievance were themselves impressive organizing events. Formal hearings were held in the Holiday Inn in Winter Haven, Florida, on November 27 and 28, 1972 in front of a packed house of farmworkers. They watched their union empower them to equal status with the company in this dispute in front of a mutually acceptable arbitrator. The comprehension that the decision of this arbitrator would be final and binding on both parties was, at first, difficult for the workers to grasp given their past history of powerlessness and unilateral dictation of wages and working conditions by their employer.

The union was represented by Joseph H. Kaplan, attorney and senior partner of the largest labor law firm in Florida. Assisting him was his junior partner, Robert A. Sugarman. Mr. Kaplan, as was often the case in issues relating to farmworkers, had offered the services of his law firm on a *pro bono* basis for this case.

Also providing evidence for the union was Joseph Lehmann, a graduate engineer with expertise in space engineering. Mr. Lehmann's specialty was packaging instruments to fit within a prescribed space. As a result, his views on the relationship between 10 field boxes and a tub as equivalent measures was pivotal to the decision by the arbitrator. He conducted field trials on the number of boxes in a tub filled to different heights or levels of fullness. In his testimony, he stated that oranges were spheres and spheres group most economically into another, larger spherical container. He used the example of a basketball in a box to describe the loss in utilized space when enclosing a sphere into a square-sided box. He concluded that until the box was twice as wide as a basketball, a second basketball would not fit into the box. The first basketball would "hang up" on the lid or side leaving a large unfilled space under it until the box reached the necessary width. He then showed that the field box was in fact two boxes with a divider down the middle. As a result there were numerous sides on the interior on which the spherical oranges could "hang up" with the resulting voids within the full field box. However, when the field box was dumped into the hemispherical tub, these voids disappeared. As a result of the ability of oranges to group most economically in the hemispherical tub, a tub (filled to the rim) which was exactly ten times larger than a field box would hold more than ten times as many oranges as 10 separate field boxes.

Mr. Lehmann presented the results of his field trials on the number of boxes which were contained in tubs filled to different levels of fullness. Most revealing was his finding that a tub which was filled "level-full", i.e. so that a lid could be placed on the tub without touching an orange, contained more than 10 boxes of fruit.

Mr. Lehmann also appeared *pro bono* in behalf of the farmworkers. His membership in the Unitarian Church in Sarasota on Fruitville Road where farmworker support groups were holding their meetings had made him aware of many of the problems of fruit pickers, including their inability to pay expert witness fees.

I also appeared *pro bono* and testified that two sets of company data--one submitted to the Pay Board and the Harvest Recap data of the company provided to the union during negotiations--showed that the workers had been picking 11.7 boxes of fruit while receiving payment for only 10.

The company's main evidence to rebut the union's data and analysis relied on the differences between the weight at the processing plant and the number of boxes for which the workers were credited in the grove. At the 90 pounds per box measure, the company argued that the workers were being paid for more boxes than weighed-in at the plant. Of course, the contract with the pickers was a volume-based rate, not a weight-based one. The union argued through Mr. Kaplan that the weight at the plant had nothing to do with the number of boxes picked in a tub.

To assist him in his determination, the arbitrator conducted a field test at Gentile Grove on March 15, 1973 in front of union and company observers. The company provided evidence that a rounded tub contained 10 field boxes, but only if those field boxes were stacked above the level of the top of the field box and cleats. Mr. Kaplan provided striking evidence that if one field box were stacked on another, which was the method of transport when the industry used boxes rather than tubs, considerable damage occurred to the oranges in the lower box. In fact, orange juice could be seen to run out of the lower box when it was mashed by the weight of the upper box.

In his final decision,[5] Mr. Bradschain ruled that:

> The Company shall pay all piece rate workers who work with bins (tubs) at the rate of ten and one-quarter times the piece rates (per field box) set forth in . . . the collective bargaining agreement for the various types of fruit there specified, for bins (tubs) filled to the agreed level as such bin (tub) was filled at the field test observed by the Arbitrator on March 15, 1973 at Gentile Grove. Such payment shall be made retroactive to April 9, 1972, the date of filing of the Grievance.

That awarded level of fullness was a tub which was level full, as determined by drawing a board across the top of the tub. Any oranges hitting the board would be removed to another tub. In short, the union won a binding decision which resulted in payment for 10.25 boxes picked in a tub which was filled to a level where no orange protruded above the rim level. The increase in remuneration per tub resulting from this union grievance was conservatively calculated at between 20 and 25 percent. Retroactive for a period of one year and from that point forward in time, every worker under contract realized this gain in earnings.

In the year of the Coca-Cola contract (1972), the United Farm Workers (AFL-CIO) engaged in an unusual collective bargaining agreement with H.P. Hood, a New England Dairy company which processed citrus in Florida both for home delivery with its milk products and for canning baby products under contract with Gerber. This Florida operation was unusual both for the labor supply it utilized and for the proportion of company-owned citrus it processed. The company employed approximately 300 citrus harvesters in 1972, but only 10 percent of the citrus it utilized in its Florida west coast processing plant were harvested from groves owned by H.P. Hood. The remaining 90 percent was harvested or purchased from independent growers primarily in central Florida. As a result, this company was not as committed to the ownership and operation of citrus groves as was the Minute Maid Corporation which owned and harvested approximately 50 percent of the citrus processed by its plant in Auburndale.

Another major difference between the two companies was their past history of labor management relationships and corporate ownership. While the Minute Maid Corporation was a wholly-owned subsidiary of the international conglomerate Coca-Cola, H.P. Hood was a closely-held family company with marketing concentration in only one region of the United States. While Coca-Cola had had considerable experience with collective bargaining outside of the Foods Division which managed Minute Maid, H.P. Hood had had no such prior experience. In fact, the officials in the company, when interviewed prior to the organizing drive on its workers, boasted that they had never been "victims" of a successful organizing drive even though they were centered in a highly unionized section of the country, New England. They were proud of the fact that the Teamsters had attempted to organize their long-haul citrus tractor/trailer drivers in Florida, but had lost the election when these workers were asked whether or not they wanted to be represented by the union. They felt that they were looking out for the interests of their workers with the result that their farmworkers would reject any attempt to unionize them.

After the contract was signed with Coca-Cola, the United Farm Workers attempted to unionize the H.P. Hood Company harvesting workers. Since farmworkers were excluded from the National Labor Relations Act in 1935 and the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, there was an absence of any legislation to regulate farm labor organization in Florida. While this void meant that there was, in effect, no such thing as an "unfair labor practice" against farmworkers and the union, this fact also resulted in the ability of farmworker unions to engage in secondary boycotts - a strategy closed to non-agricultural unions in 1947. As a result of this only advantage of being excluded from all legislative protections to unions, the UFW utilized its boycott office in Massachusetts to bring pressure on H.P. Hood to bargain with its workers representatives.

After the threat of a consumer boycott on products of its dairy in the northeast, the local officials of H.P. Hood agreed to an election among its harvesting workers. However, the issue on the ballot was not whether or not the workers wanted a union. Rather, the ballot asked whether or not the workers wanted to work under the existing contract between the UFW and the Minute Maid Corporation. It can be surmised that the company insisted on this wording to add sufficient uncertainty in the minds of the workers to induce a "no" vote in a free election.

To ensure this outcome, the company severely restricted access by the union to their workforce. Union organizers were not allowed into labor camps nor were they allowed to enter groves in which the workers were picking. Prior to the election the only significant contact with the workers were by a group of Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (Sisters Ann Kendrick, Cathy Gorman, Anne Parry, and Mary Therese Gillespie) who were allowed entry to the labor camp and were able to discuss the advantages of the union contract with farmworkers while showing them films.

The company strategy continued right to the polling place on election day where riders on the buses lectured the workers on how the Coca-Cola workers wanted their jobs and would displace them if they voted for the union contract. While these tactics by H.P. Hood would have been clear violations of the existing labor laws covering non-agricultural workers, there were no such laws to protect farmworkers. The union was left with the simple choice of whether it wanted to allow the election to commence or whether it would cancel the election and resort to the threatened boycott. In part because of the public relations problem of refusing to vote in an election offered by the company, the UFW allowed the election to take place.

To be perfectly honest, I think--given the above-mentioned company strategy of denying access by the union to the voters--the union was as surprised as anyone when it won the election at H.P. Hood. I remember the open sobbing by H.P. Hood officers in front of the building when the election results were certified. I also remember the relief and even surprise of the union officials when they received a clear-cut majority. Given the restrictions on information, this election, even more than the one at Minute Maid, provided evidence of the strong commitment among farmworkers to the union.

However, the winning of an election among workers who have little idea of the specifics on which they were voting, was not an unmitigated blessing for the union. The victory meant that the union would have to begin administering the Coca-Cola contract immediately among workers who had not even read it or received a detailed description of its provisions. Moreover, the union had not even developed strong personal relationships between its organizers and the employees at Hood. Nor did the union have any prior contact or experience with the supervisors for the company who would be implementing the contract for the company. Given the family history of successfully beating unions coupled with the expectation that they would win this specific election, these important parties to contract administration were unreconciled to having to deal with the provisions of a union contract. The imposition of the contract, especially under these conditions, represented a reduction in the unilateral power which such supervisors had exercised in the past. In short, the union had won a contract with strangers covering strangers. It was now their task to administer the contract and, at least as important, to organize the disorganized workers who were covered by its provisions.

The administration of this contract was a real-life "chain of horrors" for the over-burdened union staff and organizers. These few were already engaged in administrating the Minute Maid contract which covered nearly five times as many farmworkers as the Hood contract. However, the burden of administration ratio was the reverse of the membership count. H.P. Hood supervisors viewed the contract as an erosion of their unilateral power. They realized that the Achilles' heel of the union was the shortage of manpower to administer the contract. It was the conservative estimate of Mack Lyons that the union could easily have filed 10 to 15 grievances each day on the violations of the contract at Hood. Of course, each grievance involved several steps prior to reaching a time-consuming and expensive binding arbitration hearing. By the time these steps were exhausted, there could well be more violations of a similar type to enter the process. The backlog in grievances became a reality and the power of the union was dissipated in the process of responding to the corporation's union-busting tactics.

One example of this process was the case related to me by a steward on the Hood contract. He had complained to the company's supervisor that there were no toilets and hand washing facilities at the worksite as required under the contract. The supervisor responded by suggesting to the steward that he build the facilities himself if he wanted them so badly. As I have followed the labor relations practices of Eastern Air Lines with its unions, I have often felt that Frank Lorenzo received too much credit for originality. Many aspects of his strategy seem to be historical repetitions of the behavior of H.P. Hood in 1972.

The final blow at H.P. Hood was delivered when they sold their groves and labor camp to a company established and located in Wauchula. Since there was no successor clause in the contract, this sale canceled the UFW's bargaining unit. While there was reason to question whether or not the company subverted the union by establishing the new company, it is certain that the contract was injuring the union's ability to function. It was also clear that the success of the Minute Maid contract can be attributed in part to the disappearance of this constant stream of union-busting tactics. It is also of note that the company increased the capacity of its processing plant by nearly 25 percent shortly after "firing" its harvesters and selling its groves. In any event, the union lost the second contract and those 300 workers reverted to the non-union, employment-at-will environment which still is characteristic in Florida's agriculture.

The economic costs to the rest of the harvesters in Florida because of the lack of a grievance procedure and collective bargaining agreement have been considerable. For example, only workers covered by the United Farm Workers/Minute Maid contract have received payment for an honest tub since April 9, 1972. This contract covered approximately 3 percent of the citrus workers in the state at that time - leaving 97 percent of such workers uncovered and still picking between 2 to 2.5 boxes of fruit without payment per tub. The importance of this reduction in farmworker income can be seen in the following data which covers only the period since 1982. For each year except the 1990/91 season, the calculation utilizes the actual total harvest of oranges for processing. In the 1990/91 season, the estimate of processed oranges is 95 percent of the projected total orange crop, including those harvested for fresh fruit sales.

The dollar loss in farmworker earnings due to the use of "rounding-off" full as the prevailing standard is calculated at only 20 percent. This calculation is conservative given the only decision, discussed above, which pays farmworkers for 10.25 boxes picked into a level full tub. The box rate used is $0.65 which has been the prevailing rate in the Department of Labor surveys since 1988. This rate is also lower than the actual average, but was provided to the agribusinesses by the government to assist them in gaining access to alien workers under the H-2A program.[6]

SEASON	# BOXES PROCESSED[7] ORANGES	LOST INCOME FROM TUB ROUNDING
1982/83	129.28 MILLION	$16.806 MILLION
1983/84	109.06 "	$14.178 "
1984/85	97.24 "	$12.642 "
1985/86	110.240 "	$14.331 "
1986/87	110.830 "	$14.408 "
1987/88	128.480 "	$16.692 "
1988/89	138.112 "	$17.96 "
1989/90	104.285 "	$13.56 "
1990/91 (est.)	156.75 "	$20.38 "

TOTAL LOST EARNINGS IN FLORIDA: $ 140.957 MILLION

(FOR THE PERIOD FROM 1982/83 TO 1990/91 ONLY)

As can be seen in the previous data, the use of the adjudicated "full tub" as determined in the arbitration at Minute Maid would have increased the wages of fruit harvesters in Florida between $13 to $20 million for each of the seasons shown for the same amount of work. Although the industry is aware of this decision and the conclusion that the unit of measure in use outside of Minute Maid is invalid, the rest of the industry continues to force farmworkers to pick more than two boxes for free in each tub.

To this observer, it is clear that no programs currently in force provide the citrus harvesters in Florida with an additional $13 to $20 million in earnings for their labor each season. Were the annual earnings of this workforce of any importance to either the industry or the state, the remedy of requiring an honest tub measurement is readily available to dramatically reduce the level of poverty among citrus harvesters. In spite of the clear-cut award to the United Farm Workers in 1972 and the considerable publicity surrounding it, nearly every harvester is still being forced to pick from 20 to 25 percent of a day's work for free 18 years later. Each day that the current practice continues, the income loss to this disadvantaged group rises. There is no evidence that there is any interest in forcing the industry to pick an honest tub and to pay a fair wage for that effort. In fact, without a collective bargaining contract, if the industry were to be forced to pay 10.25 boxes in wages for a level full tub, the agribusinesses could lower the piece rate so that the wage bill for harvesters would remain unchanged.

The macro-evidence of "powerlessness" in the market is also available for review. The relative strength of labor and farm ownership can be evaluated by their factor shares - especially the direction in which these shares move over time. For example, if one factor received 30 cents out of every market dollar in 1969 and 45 cents in 1988 while the other factor's share of the market dollar dropped, this measure is evidence of the relative power of the two factors of production in agriculture. The following data present the actual changes over time for farm ownership and labor in agriculture in Florida for this period:[8]

FLORIDA
(Numbers in Thousands)

Year	Cash Receipts Plus Gov't Payments	Hired Farm Labor Expenses	Net Income Including Corp. Farms	Labor Share %	Profit Share %
1969	$1,427,619	$302,802	$ 483,045	21.21%	33.84%
1982	$4,441,174	$801,362	$1,407,095	18.04%	31.68%
1988	$5,948,253	$910,353	$2,784,726	15.31%	46.82%

As shown in these government data, the share of every market dollar from sales of crops including government payments going to farm labor in Florida has dropped from 21.21 cents per dollar in 1969 to 15.31 cents of every dollar in 1988. Moreover, the share going to farm ownership after the payment of all costs of production including labor and depreciation has risen over the same period from 33.84 cents per dollar to 46.82 cents per dollar statewide. Clearly the relative powerlessness of the farmworker is evidenced in these data.

In terms of income erosion to farm labor, it is a simple calculation to total the lost income between 1983 to 1988 resulting from this erosion in factor shares. Using the actual labor income in each of these years, a summation of the deficit in labor income due to the erosion of the 1982 share in each of those years reveals that farmworkers lost $593.156

million between 1983 and 1988 due to the cumulative effect of share reduction. Had farmworkers, for example, earned 18.04 cents on every market dollar in 1988 rather than the 15.31 cents recorded, the total income of farm labor would have been $162.712 million larger in that single year than the actual amount earned at the reduced share.

From data on the micro- and macro-levels of analysis, it is clear that farmworkers are caught in a low-level equilibrium trap--cumulative in a downward direction. While agribusiness is increasing its profits towards the level of 50 cents of every dollar of sales, farm labor is becoming a cheaper and more exploited input.

The most significant result of these adverse trends has been the destruction of the farm labor force of the 1960s and its replacement by alien workers primarily from the Caribbean and Mexico. From various governmental sources, the following history of change in the demography of farmworkers in Florida can be documented. In 1967, "as many as 95 percent of the seasonal workers (were) Negroes who depend(ed) on seasonal farm labor for their living."[9] By 1970-71 Black workers were still the largest ethnic group in citrus, but they represented only 59.4 percent while Whites represented 29.9 percent and workers of Mexican descent only 9.6 percent. The rapid rate of the displacement of Black and, to a lesser extent, White workers is evidenced in the following:[10]

> Informal estimates by the Citrus Industrial Council suggest that the ethnic makeup of the current citrus picker population has changed considerably since the 1970-71 season. For the 1974-75 season it is probable that Black workers now represent from 30-40 percent of the citrus harvest population with White workers at the 10-20 percent level and workers of Mexican descent at the 40-50 percent level.

The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (Public Law 99-603) provided an opportunity to view the changing labor force in agriculture at a more recent time. Under this act undocumented workers in agriculture who met certain residency and farm labor requirements could qualify as Special Agricultural Workers (SAW) and could receive resident status. By January, 1989, 122,042 SAW applicants had registered in Florida of which 51,428 were from Mexico and 41,085 were from Haiti. The balance were primarily from other Latin American and Caribbean basin countries.[11]

The depressing effect this supply of undocumented workers had on farmworker wages and income can only be evaluated when placed in the proper perspective. The Department of Labor[12] recorded an employment level of only 65,564 - appropriately excluding the number of H-2A workers from Jamaica in sugarcane at the time - in the state of Florida for the period ending December 15, 1988. As a result, approximately twice as many alien farmworkers applied for SAW status as the existing employment total in Florida at that time. When the researcher adds to the supply of SAW applicants the remnants of the dominant domestic labor force of the 1960's, and the existing and increasing supply of alien workers unable to provide the necessary documentation for application for SAW status, it is clear that the available supply of labor is greater than twice the number of jobs in agriculture in Florida. While the exact amount of the excess supply of labor in this market cannot be calculated, the conclusion that there is a downward pressure on wages is inescapable. This conclusion is supported by a review of the next best opportunity wage of the SAW applicants in their source countries. The relevant economic statistics for the two major source countries are as follows:[13]

MEXICO

1987 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE:	18 PERCENT
1987 UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATE:	25 TO 40 PERCENT
MINIMUM WAGE RATES PER DAY:	$US 2.91 per day

HAITI

1987 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE:	49.1 PERCENT
1987 MINIMUM WAGE RATES:	
Port-au-Prince area:	$US 3.00 per day
Other areas:	$US 2.64 per day

As shown, the workers who fled to Florida for work had strong economic motivation to emigrate. The daily rates of pay in the source countries were less than the hourly earnings possible in Florida regardless of crop. Moreover, given the unemployment and underemployment estimates for these countries, the potential for much greater income during the season was considerable.

From the perspective of domestic labor, however, these redundant workers depressed the wages in Florida agriculture both because of the excess supply of labor and because the "next best opportunity wage" existed in their countries of origin. Domestic workers, especially Blacks, were forced to leave farm work and offer their labor in entry level jobs in the non-agricultural sector of the economy where real wages were either constant or increasing over this same time frame.[14] In only 20 to 25 years, the ethnic and national origin of the farm labor force in Florida was nearly totally changed. This unusual phenomenon is unparalleled in my experience in modern times except in periods of war.

In conclusion, there are several observation which are worthy of summation from the previous passages. Farmworkers are eager for a union to protect them and through which they can be empowered. The cases of H.P. Hood and Minute Maid in Florida provide excellent examples of this fact.

Where the union had contact with the workers, it was highly effective in organizing the multi-ethnic workforce in spite of a long history of company-enforced barriers to unionization. Institutions such as racial crews, racial barriers to jobs and housing, and sexism were successfully destroyed by the United Farm Workers using the contract and its enforcement to force the workers to work together for the first time. I will always remember a comment made by one of the Black harvesters (Calvin Carter) to one of the White harvesters (Walter Williams) at the meeting of the bargaining committee in Avon Park to prepare for the first renegotiation of the Coca-Cola collective bargaining agreement. After working on the various inputs of workers statewide for several hours, Calvin chuckled and said: "If you had told me two years ago that we could sit and work together like this, I'd have told you that you were crazy."

Where the union had no access to the workforce (H.P. Hood), organization was not possible even though the workers wanted and voted for the union and its contract. Clearly, this case of union-busting proves the need for protective labor legislation to cover agricultural workers. The absence of any laws defining unfair labor practices by management in agriculture in Florida must be changed if there is to be any improvement in the plight of farmworkers.

Without control over legal and illegal immigration, labor organization is nearly impossible. When coupled with the absence of labor laws covering farmworker unionization, the unlimited inflow of workers from the third world results in easy displacement of workers who support the union or strike for recognition and collective bargaining.

The economic trends in Florida agriculture are that the share of the agribusinesses of every dollar of revenue has increased over time at the expense of the farmworkers' share of revenue. This loss in income has been matched by a reduction in the real value of piece rates of approximately 50 percent since 1967. This erosion of farmworker income has occurred concurrently with the destruction of the primarily Black domestic labor force which existed only 25 years ago.

It is sobering to note the plethora of programs and interest groups which have been actively supporting farmworkers in their struggle for empowerment and economic gains during the same period in which these adverse conditions were worsening. In spite of Legal Services, housing ventures, direct assistance, child care, church support, unionization attempts, political endorsement, documentaries, academic research, and other activities which have as their goal the improvement of farmworker conditions, their plight has worsened to the point where the farmworker population of 1970 has even been destroyed and replaced by alien workers.

Florida truly has a farmworker history worthy of study and further analysis. It is much more than a footnote to unionization attempts elsewhere in this country.

NOTES

1. For example, see: Jacquez Levy, *Cesar Chavez, Autobiography of La Causa* (W. W. Norton, 1975), and Dick Meister and Anne Loftis, *A Long Time Coming, the Struggle to Unionize America's Farmworkers* (MacMillan, 1977).

2. Robert D. Emerson, "Farm Workers and Labor Organization," in *Florida's Farmworkers ... Toward a Responsible Public Policy*, (Institute for Social Policy Studies, Tallahassee: 1977) p. 17.

3. It should be noted that this process of 6 California organizers finding the Coca-Cola workers in groves, housing, and equipment barns in 12 counties of Florida was facilitated by a unique educational experiment at New College in Sarasota, Florida called Project REAL. This fieldwork research program was developed by Dr. Barry and approximately 250 students over several years. Forty of these students under the direction of Student Coordinator Rebecca Hurst Acuna, mapped nearly 30,000 acres of Coca-Cola groves under more than 20 corporate names and provided maps and instructions to the organizers for each of the 12 counties. Any worker on one of the identified properties was an employee of Coca-Cola even though he/she might not have been aware of the identity of the employer. The students of Project REAL were researchers in the writing of the "Petition To The Pay Board in Support of the Collective Bargaining Agreement of the Coca-Cola Foods Division and the United Farm Workers (AFL-CIO) of February 29, 1972 (Case No. 06262)." This 136 page document was required for exemption from the existing Economic Stabilization Act which capped wage increases at a maximum of 7 percent per year. The petition successfully excluded the UFW contract from this wage cap by documenting that farmworkers were members of the working poor.

   Project REAL received one of four national awards in 1972 for excellence in the teaching of Economics at the university level from the Joint Council on Economic Education. Other Student Coordinators over the years were E. Alexander Goldstein, Reynolds Russell, and John Burns.

4. Arbitration in the Matter of the Coca-Cola Company Foods Division and the United Farm Workers, AFL-CIO, befor Joseph Bradschain, Arbitrator, Dated: April 13, 1973, p. 2.

5. Ibid., p. 13.

6. For a discussion of this fact, see: *The Adverse Impact of Immigration on Florida's Farmworkers* by D. Marshall Barry. (Joint Publication of the Florida Caribbean Institute and the Center for Labor Research and Studies at Florida International University, Occasional Paper No. 3, November 1989, 74 pages plus appendices).

7. Florida Agriculture, Florida Agricultural Statistics Service, "Citrus," (various dates).

8. Bureau of the Census, Regional Economic Information System, Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Farm Income and Expenses", Table CA45, April 1989.

9. William H. Metzler, Ralph A. Loomis, and Nelson L. LeRay, *Farm Labor Situation in Selected States*, Economic Development Division, Economic Research Service, Washington, D.C. (April 1967), p. 24.

10. Gary F. Fairchild, *Socioeconomic Dimensions of Florida Citrus Harvesting Labor*. ERD Report 75-2, University of Florida, December 1975, pp. 30-31.

11. Mr. Wayne Joy, Assistant Director for Legalization, Miami Office, Immigration and Naturalization Service, October 1989.

12. United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, *In-Season Farm Labor Report* (ETA 223), 12/15/88.

13. United States Department of Labor, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, *Foreign Labor Trends*, Mexico (FLT 89-30) and Haiti (FLT 89-29).

14. See:*The Adverse Impact of Immigration on Florida's Farmworkers*, op. cit., for a full discussion of this economic mechanism.

SHADOWS FROM THE PAST: DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING IN FLORIDA'S FIELDS

JO APPLEBAUM

Jo Applebaum received a Bachelor's degree in Humanities at Johns Hopkins and spent a year at the NYU Film School, specializing in film production. She was the assistant editor and the art cover researcher for the Florida field documentary, and she is currently working on a video project for the Yorkville Common Pantry.

I would like to begin by saying that I'm not a scholar or an historian, but someone who is very interested in fishing for information, and I thank you for the opportunity to share what I have found and a little bit about the process of how I found it. The context for the research is an independent documentary film that began as an investigation into the conditions of the various population of farm laborers in Belle Glade. The director and a two person camera crew went to Belle Glade to film workers in the field, and talk to them about their lives, and conditions. I was, unfortunately, not part of that process.

On a break from shooting they went to a "Stop and Shop" to get coffee and by chance met an old man named Samuel who was collecting cans for change. They started talking and Samuel told them that he had come to Florida from Memphis in 1941 to cut sugar cane for the United States Sugar Corporation. His story was so intriguing that the crew shot lengthy interviews with him. He said that he and many others came expecting one thing and found something altogether different. The men, he claimed, were essentially held prisoners, beaten out of bed at 3:00 a.m., locked to their beds at night if they tried to run away, and guarded by armed guards. He wrote letters to the Chief Justice in Washington at that time, and eventually there was an investigation and indictments were brought against the company and its farm superintendents. After just a few weeks at the plantation, Samuel managed to escape and found work picking beans on another farm. He tried to get work in the cane fields years later but was told they didn't want American workers anymore. In Samuel's words, "they fixed a new system."

I had hoped to show you the historical section of the film that I am working on but, unfortunately, because the film is being edited at the moment, I am unable to do that. So I am going to show a piece of film that was produced by CBS on a show called "West 57th Street." They set out to do a "Harvest of Shame No. 2" and went back to Belle Glade to show the conditions of the workers and they also met Samuel and interviewed him. So, I'll show this piece of film just to give you an idea of the character and to give you a sense of why we pursued the research so you can see it.

(Film being shown at this time.)

I wish I could show you more, but now you have a sense of Samuel. When I first saw the footage of Samuel, I didn't think that it could be used in the film. I thought Samuel was an incredible character in every sense. I thought he would make a great subject for another film, a film about his life, his thoughts, a film that would allow its audience to suspend somewhat its powers of criticism, not a film that ought to be based on fact. I didn't know if we could believe his story. I am afraid I am somewhat jaded by the people I see on the streets of New York, muttering their stories or imagined stories to anyone who will listen to them. I was not schooled to take an individual's story as history, and certainly not to base any sort of allegation on the testimony of a lone can collector on the streets of Belle Glade.

I would like to digress a little bit to talk about the issues that working on this film brought for me before I return to talking about Samuel. In the mass media, especially in television, there's often a hazy distinction between fact and fiction, and given a sense of TV watching, a person might watch "People's Court," "L.A. Law," "America's Most Wanted" and top it off with the evening news. We assume a news program is showing us what's really happening, only to find that it uses a dramatization to show a drug bust or footage from Afghanistan as a stand-in for a story on Beirut in lieu of the real thing.

Of all the arts, film has the peculiar ability to distort facts and revise history. A good example of the media's ability to create the past is "The Final Days," the story of the demise of Richard Nixon, which aired recently on television. From this case, the general audience might even accept that an actual event is being presented as fiction, possibly without questioning the facts. So interestingly, in a recent editorial in the *New York Times*, the writer refers to a scene in "The Final Days" in which Nixon rolls around on the floor in hysterics. He writes, "In a perverse way, I was glad to see the burst of sensationalist excess. It cast into doubt some of the distastefully true parts of the half-fiction account." In other words, the filmmaker gave the audience the justification for discounting material in the film, something I wish to avoid.

The filmmaker has a great responsibility in making a documentary because the audience largely assumes that what is being presented is the truth. The filmmaker can't count on those in the audience to ask themselves whether or not something is true and then go to the library to check it out. But even if the filmmaker has the best of intentions, filmmaking involves making choices and those choices are based on a point of view. It's interesting to note that in the film we just saw there is a narrator who speaks for Samuel as the voice of truth. He also says that Samuel is from Georgia and Samuel says he's from Memphis. Oh, I think they made a mistake. In the film we are making there won't be the objective voice of a narrator; all the characters will speak for themselves. It's common to shoot more than ten times more footage than will actually be used in the finished film and that means that in the editing room the material is pared down and the decisions are made as to what are the most powerful juxtapositions. There's a great temptation to bend reality to achieve a certain effect or evoke a certain emotion. Thus, the ongoing issue for the filmmaker is where to draw that line.

Sam's claims were so powerful and so compelling, we wanted to believe him. Sam would have us believe, according to what he told us, that he single-handedly brought the company to its knees. How do we put together bits and pieces of information from the past and arrive at truth? That's the question we're talking about today. We needed evidence to back him up and hoped we'd find the stories of others to help fill in some of the gaps. We wanted to be accountable and this was the starting point of our research. We hoped we could find specific visual images either in film or still photographs to portray the wretched conditions and brutal circumstances that Sam described. The images conjured up by Samuel's story were so vivid in my mind: a white man holding a blackjack with a pistol on his hip; hundreds of men living in substandard conditions in a company barracks; a worker chained to a bed.

I started at the National Archives thinking that I might find newsreels of that time that would show the plight of the farm laborer. I expected that in the repository of our nation's records there would be an excellent index and cross reference system so that when I looked up "Florida, sugar cane workers, 1940s," I would find just what I was looking for. What I found were files and files of index cards grouped together loosely by subject that had to be sifted through. I was warned that the system was not well cross-referenced and the whole thing seemed somewhat haphazard. I found a lot of tourist footage of beautiful Florida shorelines and a lot of footage of lovely Florida bathing beauties, but precious little footage of sugar cane workers in Florida or any laborers, for that matter. An odd tantalizing piece of footage from Cuba, perhaps, but I was determined to find the real thing. Often when I did find something that might have been relevant, I was told that that particular piece of film had been destroyed in a fire when a batch of films spontaneously combusted. I suddenly realized that this would be difficult.

There was some footage of workers cutting cane which I found encouraging if not compelling, and a piece about new harvesting machinery which showed the cutters standing around marveling at the great advance in technology which could potentially render them obsolete. I also found U.S. Department of Agriculture propaganda about wartime sugar rationing and the supposed importance of sugar to our national security.

I came to the conclusion that with the expense and cumbersome nature of film, that it was unlikely that there were many people walking around the cane fields or the company barracks with a movie camera in the early '40s, especially under the circumstances that Sam described. And, realistically, this was not the sort of pictures the government wished to present to the American people.

I then began my quest for still images hoping that the search would be more fruitful. During that period the Farm Security Administration, under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture, conducted an investigation of the conditions of migrant labor in this country. The result was a body of photographs documenting the inhuman conditions in which these people lived and worked. The Library of Congress has a complete set of these photographs. Many of them have become famous as symbols of the hardships that these workers faced. But although there were many compelling images of Belle Glade and the conditions of workers in other crops, there were very few photographs of sugar cane workers other than those taken in the field. There were photographs taken of the exteriors of the camps of the United States Sugar Corporation, the neat houses all in a row, row after row, but there were no images of the interiors. Where did the men sleep? Where did they wash? Where did they eat? These answers were not to be found on film.

This lack of visual information was not due to a lack of workers. At that time U.S. Sugar had 20,000 acres of sugar cane, 80% of the total cane acreage of South Florida. They operated 11 plantations and employed over four thousand men.

The search of the photographs was a great test of our integrity. There were so many powerful images of other workers working other crops in other places that it was tempting to use those images as stand-ins for the ones we couldn't find. After all, we could guess what the conditions were like and they could achieve the same effect with an image of a cotton picker from Georgia or even a bean picker from Belle Glade. One particular image that came to our attention became the symbol of this problem. It was a picture of the feet of a farmer from St. Croix. He had gone without shoes for so long that he no longer had need of them (his skin is tougher than any leather). The photograph had a strong emotional effect. It represents the suffering and perseverance of the worker. We debated about this picture throughout the process of the research because it was so compelling and yet so inaccurate.

With tame images on hand, we went on to contact film archives, historical societies, and museums all over the country to find material that more specifically portrayed the lives of workers like Samuel. When I requested material that depicted the living and working conditions of sugar cane cutters in Florida in the 1940s, many archivists were amused. They're used to researching obscure topics, but this was definitely a challenge. Gradually we obtained material from various sources, but it was clear that there were great omissions in these visual records. We found images of the mill operations, the men working in the fields, a few shots of white men overseeing the workers, and footage of the men having their lunch served off the back of the truck in the fields. Shots that don't look much different from what you would see today in the cane fields.

At the same time we hunted for any information about the early sugar industry and specifically details relating to peonage charges that were brought against the United States Sugar Corporation in 1942 by the United States government. Jerrell Shofner's article, "The Legacy of Forced Labor," that appeared in the *Journal of Southern History* in 1981, provided us with information about this case and prompted us to look for first-hand testimony in other primary sources. This meant more sifting at the National Archives. I thought at least the general records would be organized somehow by subject and referenced in an accessible way. Again, this was not the case. What I found in the organization of the National Archives, was the history of American governmental bureaucracy. The records are grouped by government agency and by the officers responsible for various areas within that agency. There were several different agencies that had some jurisdiction over labor affairs and several people within those agencies that had jurisdiction. Which means that there could be dozens of record groups that contain relevant information, and the only way to know is to look through box after box of various documents. We knew the evidence was there. We just had to find it.

In the records of the Justice Department there is a summary of the FBI's investigation into the allegations of peonage and forced labor made by individuals who were induced to go to Florida to cut cane. The report contains summaries of about 25 statements mostly of workers but some of mothers of workers who were concerned about the welfare of their sons. The problem with these summaries is that the testimonies are filtered through the typewriter of an FBI agent and, except for a few quotes, they are not in the complainants' own language. All the workers had been recruited by local U.S. Employment Service offices in Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas. Because the cane grows on land that is drained Everglades swampland, there was not a sufficient local labor force. According to a government report on migratory labor of May 1940, "The Negroes are used exclusively in the fields in this section just as they are in Dade and Broward Counties. All of the shed and packinghouse labor in the Belle Glade area is white." That was the plan, hence it was only black workers who were brought to the sugar plantation.

The U.S. Employment Service recruitment poster that was also part of the Justice Department records reads: "Enjoy Florida sunshine during the winter months. Colored farm workers to harvest sugar cane on the plantations of the United States Sugar Corporation. Good wages, good living conditions, free transportation and meals to Florida. Cash issued daily." At the local U.S. Employment Service offices, the workers were promised wages of three to six dollars per day, free housing and medical attention on the plantations. Some workers were told that they would be working for the government as part of the war effort. Others assumed that U.S. Sugar was a government farm because of its name.

According to a letter of the U.S. Employment Service concerning U.S. Sugar's request for 500 workers, "The United States Employment Service does not assume any responsibility except to recruit these workers." The letter states that the transportation fare to Florida was an "advance" which would be deducted from the workers' pay and refunded at the end of two months. "If you are a good worker," it says, "there's no reason why you cannot earn three to four dollars a day as a cane cutter." According to the FBI's summaries, the workers were loaded onto trucks, buses, and trains and on the two to three day trip to Florida they were provided with a few meager meals. Having been told that they would need to bring nothing with them as everything would be provided by the company, they did not have money to buy food and they certainly did not have money to pay their transportation home.

When they arrived in Florida, they were greeted by the farm superintendent who told them that they were now indebted to the company for their transportation at a cost which ranged from eight to nineteen dollars. They were given two dollars with which to buy supplies: a cane knife, a blanket, and an I.D. badge that indicated that they worked for U.S. Sugar. Some workers were told that they did not have to accept the two dollars and could just leave. But upon accepting the two dollars they would owe the company. These debts would be deducted from the workers' salaries and they were informed that they could not leave until their debt was paid. According to the statement of one cutter, the superintendent informed the men, "Don't try to leave. Wherever you go I'll catch you." Instead of the six dollars that some of the men were promised, they were then told that they would make $1.80 per day. This was a figure repeated again and again in the report, something Samuel recalled forty years later in one of the interviews. They worked from about 3:30 a.m. until well after dark and when one of the cutters complained to the foreman about the hours and low wage he was told, "I know you are going to work if you stay here and I'm not worried about you staying here because I know you can't get away."

The men were told they would be paid once a month but generally received nothing on their first payday because their debt had not been sufficiently reduced by their labor. One worker managed to get a discharge because his wife wrote him and said she was sick. He was paid 40 cents for his thirteen days of hard work. Also deducted from their pay was approximately $5 a week for food which the workers generally stated was pretty bad. They could also buy food at the company commissary where the workers claimed the scales were weighted against them. They also had to pay 5 cents for a gallon of clean drinking water because the water that was available to them in the fields was filthy.

With the few dollars they were advanced from their pay they were also able to gamble at Mack's bar, an establishment run by one of the farm superintendents. Mr. Mack allegedly took a cut for himself. But then if the cutters were found gambling at another establishment he would have them arrested and taken to Clewiston were they were fined $25, as gambling was illegal. Mr. Mack was the deputy sheriff and had the cutters work off their fines in the fields.

Many workers reported being beaten by the foremen for not working fast enough. The farm superintendents came to the fields with pistols and blackjacks. One worker reports that the superintendents brought a braided whip to the fields and walked around near the cutters and cracked it while they worked. A superintendent was said to have drawn his pistol to shoot at the cane tops.

Understandably, given these circumstances, many workers attempted to escape even though they were threatened by guards that they would be shot if they tried. Three men left the Bare Beach Camp one night and walked eighteen miles down the railroad tracks. They stopped at a farmhouse near the tracks for some water and a white man driving by stopped to question them. He wore a sheriff's badge and had a gun on his hip. He was wearing a large cowboy hat. Upon searching the men, the sheriff found the U.S. Sugar badge on one of them and called Mr. Mack. He put them in jail for the night without charging them. The next day they were picked up and returned to the camp and were informed that if they ran away again they would be put in jail for nine months. The testimony of each worker tells a similar story of deception, brutality, intimidation, and forced labor.

Though this evidence was certainly incriminating, it was nonetheless written in the government's hand. Interestingly, in a memo signed by J. Edgar Hoover, he requests that agents take special care not to include their own personal opinion or prejudice in the investigative report. I was determined to find the voices of the men and I hoped that the original report by the FBI would contain them. I requested a copy of the report, some several hundred pages, under the Freedom of Information Act. Under the Act an agency must respond to such a request within ten days. This means that within ten days the agency notifies you that they have received your request and that they are working on it. When I visited the FBI in Washington to check up on my documents and find out when I could expect them, the archivist working on my case told me he had been working on another case for the last ten years. I was not encouraged. He couldn't tell me how long it would take because first the materials had to be photocopied and much of it was on degraded microfilm which did not copy well. I was warned that much of the material would be illegible. When it was all assembled, some unfortunate person would have to read through three to four hundred pages and excise with a knife or a broad black marker anything that could violate someone's privacy or was otherwise exempt from the Freedom of Information Act.

After several months I did receive this massive report. Each page that had been operated on with a scalpel was stapled on to a blank page to keep it all in one piece. Most of the names and addresses were excised, though not all. I don't know if that was an oversight or if they were left for some reason. The dates were also removed which was something I couldn't understand. There were entire paragraphs that were gone and sometimes several replacement pages that indicated that approval by another agency had to be obtained before those pages could be released. There were even excisions on pages that were not legible in the first place. I don't know how they figured it out but they did.

The report contained official correspondence, some letters that had been sent home by workers, and more in-depth descriptions of the abuses by the companies. One cutter testified that the doors of his camp, Bare Beach, had not been locked the first week he was there but after some men ran off, the barracks was locked each night at nine o'clock. This was the camp that Samuel claimed was guarded by armed guards. The FBI summary does not include statements that the camp was ever locked. In fact, in its introduction the summary states, "There is dispute as to whether or not the men are locked in the barracks at night, whether the camps are guarded by armed men, and whether the men are free to leave the employ of the company." There were, in the investigative reports, other mentions of the barracks being locked.

There were other camps, however, that were not locked which made it possible for the workers to run away. Several workers attempted to escape and were apprehended and beaten. One was told that if he said anything about the beating he'd be killed. Several workers reported being shot at while trying to escape. According to the report, another group of men attempted to escape from the Miami Lochs plantation and were also stopped by a white man. When he saw they had a U.S. Sugar blanket, he drew his pistol and make them get into his truck. The superintendent took them back to the camp and warned "If you ever try anything like that again I'll kill you, you'll never get out of here." These are all just specifics of a common theme.

The letters of the workers in the file mostly indicated that they were not doing very well. Many workers claimed that the mail was censored by the company. The men were told to give their letters unsealed to an official and some family members stated that they thought that some letters that they had received had been supervised. One mother got no responses from letters to her son, then received a letter from the company saying he wanted to finish out the season and was free to go if he wished. Another mother received letters from her son saying he was sick and she was later visited by a white man who arrived in an automobile at her home who told her that her son was all right and that it wasn't true that they were being guarded. A mother received a letter from her son claiming that two workers were locked up as result of trying to escape. She sent the letter to the county sheriff who in turn sent it to the FBI. In reference to this letter, an FBI special agent states: "It is strongly suspected that the aforementioned Mr._________ had some ulterior motive in furnishing this information to the sheriff. It is believed highly probable that the alleged victim is probably serving on some Florida chain gang or in some penal institution." The agent does suggest interviewing the worker, however, because the letter indicated peonage violations.

The letters written by the mothers were the gems of my research. The following is a letter from Vida Cosley of Birmingham, Alabama dated October 20, 1942, that's part of the records of the Justice Department:

> Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:
>
> I'm a colored mother and need your help. My boy answered an advertisement in our *Post* paper for a job as he was out of work and had myself and two younger boys depending on him. As it turned out they were sent to Clewiston, Florida a month ago and he can't get away or write...

> Won't you please help me get my boy home and please don't send this letter back because I'm afraid if they find out I've written to you they will kill my boy.
>
> Now Mrs. Roosevelt, my boy and the other 48 that left with him are all subject to draft and I am afraid that maybe this is a Nazi camp of some kind and they are holding all the boys to keep them out of the Army. So won't you please investigate this and see if you can send my boy home. We need his help.

One mother sent a March 1942 article from a Memphis newspaper addressed to "Mr. President of the U..." which told the story of three escapees. The article, entitled "Peonage Stories Told by Victims," began: "Ragged, unkempt, and exhausted, three young farm laborers reached Atlanta Friday and told alarming stories of slavery, armed guards and whippings on a Clewiston, Florida, sugar cane plantation." These workers told the same stories of broken promises, debt, slavery and abuse. They had with them a recruitment circular that had pictures of carnivals, barbecues, and weekly entertainment that made the life of the cane cutters seem luxurious. This was an image the company was rigorously promoting.

In 1941, U.S.S.C. published a booklet entitled "Sugar in the Everglades" that discussed various aspects of its operations including its workers. It tells of "the neat, orderly, and well-maintained cottages of the happy contented plantation workers. No employee of the sugar operations is permitted to be in debt to his employer." The pamphlet actually makes the claim that sugar cane workers have the best deal in agriculture "a well-paid, contented working force makes for efficient operations and explains why sugar can be produced at lower unit cost in the Everglades, despite the much higher daily wages, than in the offshore areas." A representative of the Department of Agriculture labor section of the sugar division is quoted as saying "On the whole, sugar cane workers in Florida constitute a relatively privileged class of agricultural workers."

On November 4, 1942 indictments were brought against the personnel manager, three farm superintendents, and the United States Sugar Corporation itself for violating the involuntary servitude and slavery statute. The indictments charged that the defendants "injured, oppressed, threatened, and intimidated" field workers. Pat Whittaker, who had previously represented the Ku Klux Klan, was the defense attorney for U.S. Sugar. The indictments were rendered invalid because the grand jury was judged to have been illegally selected.

The jurors had all been selected from Hillsborough County due to wartime fuel shortages. The defense argued that these people knew nothing about the problems of farmers and their sentiments had been skewed against the sugar industry by articles in local newspapers. Another grand jury was selected and heard the case in June of 1943 but this time a verdict of "no bill" was delivered. Despite extensive testimony, the jury decided that there was not enough evidence to indict and the government closed the case.

Due to labor shortages during the war, even with the efforts to recruit domestic labor, thousands of foreign workers were brought to this country to work in agriculture. During the war, a system was established whereby if an industry showed a shortage of labor, government agencies arranged for foreign workers to be brought to that area. Not only did the sugar industry have a constant shortage of cane cutters but there was an additional pressure to produce due to wartime sugar shortages. But even after the war, the sugar industry continued to use West Indians to harvest cane. The West Indies provided a seemingly unlimited number of workers, workers who would come for a specific period of time to perform a specific task. Workers who could always be sent home. This is the new system that Samuel refers to.

I would just like to close with a quote from Samuel, a little of his philosophy:

> I feel like the creator of life put man on earth to suffer certain things and make preparation for the generation behind him not to walk in the same traps and go through the same struggle, make improvement in life. The soul of Edison, Franklin, and Lindberg, and all the great men that have gone on is usable for the world today and tomorrow and forever shall be. The soul of men is nothing more than the mind and until you change your mind you are forever on the wrong road.

ORAL HISTORY: BUILDING BLOCKS FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH

SAMUEL PROCTOR

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There is a critical need to use oral history in order to make labor archives more valuable and also to preserve the records of contemporary and past labor leaders and all those who have played active roles in the labor movement in Florida and the United States. There is a saying in Africa, an area of the world that is much committed to oral tradition, the passing on of history verbally from one generation to the next: "When an old man dies, a library burns." And that is the basis and reason, I think, of oral history. If you do not in some way capture the memories and recollections of people while they are alive and while their recollections are still clear and pertinent, you have lost much that is valuable and that is otherwise irretrievable. The oral historian really is just one step ahead of the undertaker, and if the undertaker arrives before the historian, no matter how wonderful the memories of the deceased person were, no matter how rich the recollections, they are lost forever.

The business of asking questions of knowledgeable people and getting answers is probably as old as time itself. People likely have been doing that since they first learned to speak and when they first began recording history, whether it was on a papyrus scroll, scratching on the side of a cave, or whatever. Oral history, which may be defined as mechanically recording a conversation between two people, is only as old as mechanical recording devices and these are products of the twentieth century. One of the earliest examples of a recording device was one developed shortly after the turn of the century. The inventor used a system similar to Thomas Alva Edison's early recording device. It was used to record an interview or conversation with one of the last living members of an agricultural settlement that a group of Scandinavians had started in Illinois. The colony did not succeed, there were few written records, and there was little information about this early settlement. The one recorded interview helped to fill the missing gap in the historical record. By the 1920s and the 1930s, recording devices had been developed, at least to the degree that anthropologists and historians could record conversations and music, mainly with Indians living in the western part of the United States. There was a small oral history project that was part of the WPA Federal Writers Program in the 1930s, and some of these disks survived. But oral history as we recognize it did not develop until the post World War II period.

The first organized program was established by the noted American historian, Alan Nevins, at Columbia University in 1948, and oral history quickly began to spread all over the United States and all over the world. Nevins and other pioneers saw oral history as a tool for compiling material for the writing of biography and autobiography. By the beginning of the 1960s, there were several dozen projects--mostly small--underway in the United States, and a few in other countries. In 1966 a group of oral history practitioners--seventy-seven--assembled at Lake Arrowhead Conference Center of the University of California, Los Angeles, to meet each other and to share their experiences. The following year, at the invitation of the oral history program at Columbia University, a conference was held at Arden House, Columbia's conference center outside New York City. It was this conference that established, in November 1967, the Oral History Association. At that time there were approximately seventy-five members, mostly from the United States, but also from England, Europe, Canada, Mexico, and Latin America. This illustrates how quickly oral history has grown and I think that the reasons for this development are what we are talking about at this conference: the need to record and preserve history that is not otherwise being recorded or saved.

We live in a time when people write lots of letters and memos; we are part of the paper revolution. Look at your desk and your file cabinets, and you will realize how much paper--much of it needlessly--that we are producing. Unfortunately, however, when you read the letters that go back and forth and the memos that are exchanged, one finds that many do not say very much at all. So much of our real business is carried on through telephone conversations, or are unrecorded discussions around the conference table, at a cocktail party, on the golf course, or at the tennis club--maybe even in a hot tub. As a result, the letter one person writes to another may refer to information that is understandable to the writer and the recipient, but to few others. That paper is filed, but the later-day researcher is going to examine the letter and wonder what they were talking about. But if the researcher had an opportunity to discuss the matter with knowledgeable persons, it might clear things up. An oral history is one important way to go, and I think, that is a major reason why oral history has grown so widely throughout the world. In 1966, at the time of the Arrowhead Conference, very few people knew anything about oral history. That is no longer the case.

Even more important is the fact that oral history, for the first time in human history, gives hitherto voiceless people an opportunity to tell their stories and to make their own imprint on the historical record. If one examines the history books that were written before the 1950s, they are mainly the accounts of the elites of the world: presidents, kings and queens, generals, business leaders, all people who had an opportunity to record their own histories if they were literate, or had secretaries, or scribes, or someone who could do the job for them if they were not capable or did not have the time. If you want to know about Thomas Jefferson, you have no problem. The researcher can go to the National Archives, the Library of Congress, or the University of Virginia Library and find reams of manuscripts--letters, diaries, etc., because Mr. Jefferson wrote letters, he kept journals, and, very importantly, he had the facilities so that these things could be preserved. Even if you and I were great letter writers and diary and journal keepers, my house or office is not adequate for long-term storage of fragile materials. Very few of us have the facilities to do that. The point is that oral history has given the people who are illiterate or too busy making a living on a day-to-day basis or being concerned with the needs of their own families the chance to talk about their past. Their history will not be lost just because they do not have the time to write or the ability to write.

One of the major projects in the University of Florida Oral History Program is the recording of Indian history. We have more than 800 interviews with Indians living in the southeastern part of the United States. About ten percent of the American Indian population live in the Southeast, but relatively little is known about these people--past or present. The Indians that we seem to know the most about are those that we often see on television and the movies--riding horses and ponies, shooting bows and arrows, killing buffaloes, wearing feathered headdresses. The so-called forest Indians live in the Southeast--both in the rural areas and in cities like Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Pensacola, Charlotte, N.C., and Washington, D.C. With funding support from the Doris Duke Foundation, we have recorded conversations with them beginning in 1971. Their hitherto unrecorded part was and is rapidly disappearing. Many of their young people do not have the time nor patience to listen to the older folk tell about the past. We are recording that kind of data. We have also been working with Blacks throughout Florida and several ethnic groups in South Florida. Some of this data relates to labor and will be a value to the Florida International University program.

You are thinking about, and perhaps have already begun, utilizing oral history as a way to gather Florida labor history. It is a critically needed activity. I want to congratulate you who are already involved and to encourage expansion and growth. I want to suggest to you some of the problems and some of the possible pitfalls that oral history projects can fall into if you are not careful.

First of all, it is not an activity to enter into without serious consideration and study. There are questions to be raised and answers to those questions that need to be answered before you seriously start a Florida labor oral history project. I often talk with people who are interested in doing oral history--individuals developing their own family histories, groups like churches and other organizations that are getting ready to celebrate a centennial, or whatever it might be. They usually tell me that they have dedicated volunteers, people who know how to interview because they worked on a newspaper or they have a degree in journalism, or they used interviewing to collect data for a book or a documentary film or something similar. Some folks believe that all you need to be an oral historian is to know how to talk and to operate a tape recorder. That is not so, and I am going to advise whoever will be directing the oral history program for the labor archives that is being established at Florida International University to consider carefully all the proper steps to take.

First, there is the need to determine who is going to be interviewed. That can be the decision of the program director or an advisory committee. Compile a list of people who would be both beneficial and desirable to interview. It will likely be a long list with many more persons than the project has the time or money to work with. That is one of the weaknesses that has been part of oral history from the beginning, the lack of dollars to support all the projects that need to be done. I guess that is true of all academic activities, but it should not stop you and it will not.

From the list of potential interviewees, give priority to those that you believe are going to be the most cooperative, who have the most to tell you, and who will make a sincere effort to remember as much as possible. Of course, try to talk to the older interviewees first, but you have to take other matters into consideration also--the health of the interviewee, his accessibility, and the time that he or she is willing to devote to you.

Another matter is selecting the persons who will be doing the interviewing. Many projects start out with a dozen or so volunteers, all very enthusiastic. Then volunteers may begin to disappear if it gets in the way of their job or family responsibilities or their social or recreational interests. One can use volunteers very successfully, but it does not always work. On the other hand, most projects do not have the funds to pay interviewers, so you likely do not have any choice in the matter. When you select interviewers look for people who have certain special qualifications. They do not have to have college degrees or have any special kind of training, but they need to be individuals who are flexible, easy to communicate with others, and have good common sense. They have to be outgoing because they are selling the project. You, the interviewer, are asking someone to talk about many personal things. You have to win your interviewee over almost immediately since that individual is seeing you perhaps for the first time. The interviewer has to be someone who has the qualifications of a salesman since he or she is selling the validity of oral history and the importance of the project. Perhaps the most important thing the interviewer has to learn to do is to listen. Allow the narrator to talk, to answer questions; be a good listener. The interviewer is a person who should not get into an argument with the interviewee. He or she may disagree with the interviewee as far as labor philosophies are concerned, or politics, or religion, or whatever, but the interviewer needs to keep silent about his own biases, attitudes or prejudices. Do not turn the interviewee off by being argumentative.

An absolute necessity is to train the interviewers. Go through a rigid training program. That is very important. Among other things you have to convince the interviewer of the necessity of preparing for the interview. Some might argue, "Why do I need to prepare for a labor interview? I have been a laborer, or a labor official, or something similar all of my life." That may be true, but you have to put every interview into its historical context. Some years ago, we did an oral history project in Gainesville, in which we attempted to examine the home front during World War II. The volunteers examined old issues of the *Gainesville Sun*, much of it is on microfilm. I wanted the interviewer to know the grocery prices, where the movie theaters were located, and so on. They also looked through copies of *Life Magazine* to see what was happening in the world. It was necessary to have all of this information so that interviewers could use local, national, and international happenings to jog people's memory.

Memory is a very fragile thing, and oral historians are often questioned about the validity of the material collected, particularly from elderly narrators. People will say, "You are asking somebody about something that happened forty years ago, and I cannot find my car keys that I put away this morning." The oral historian thinks that with the right kind of question, the right prompting, the past can, indeed, be recalled. The interviewer can turn the interviewee on so that he or she can remember. Often you need to prompt memory. The interviewer asks a question, but the interviewee has no immediate recollection. The interviewer then might ask, "Well, did it happen after the fire?" "Before the war started?" "Were you already married?" It is those kinds of "prompts" that you can use with the person that is being interviewed. Often it will help them to recall incidents and events. People remember things that happened at times of personal or public trauma. Almost everyone can remember where he or she was when the tragic news of President Kennedy's assassination was broadcast. Do not ask, "Where were you on the afternoon of November 22, 1963?" Instead, pose the question, "Where were you when you heard the news of the Kennedy assassination?" Old-timers will similarly recall Pearl Harbor, and others may react to the question, "Where were you when Nixon resigned?" In other words, use these kinds of questions to help the interviewee to remember in the way that he or she should remember.

Interviews need to be conducted in a place where the best sound recording is possible. You will need to transcribe the tapes and you will want clear recording. A sound studio obviously would be the best place to get a quality recording, but few of us have access to a sound studio, and even if we did, that austere, severe room would do little to encourage very much remembering on the narrator's part. The best locale for an interview is in the interviewee's home or office. The memorabilia on the walls, books, pictures, the familiar furniture itself will often help to recall events of the past. But you do need a quiet place--no ticking clocks, squeaky chairs, noisy fans or air conditioners, or ringing telephone--to disturb the conversation or to create background noises that could interfere with the transcribing procedures. You also need a room that will insure privacy and as few interruptions as possible.

You will need approximately three hours for the interview. It could take longer, of course. The time is determined by the subject, and, of course, the amount of time the narrator is willing to devote. The time and place of the interview is mainly determined by the interviewee, although the needs of the interviewer must also be considered. The oral history interview involves two people and both must be considered in making arrangements.

Another important matter is the transfer of copyrights to the project sponsoring the oral history program. Under the copyright law the interviewer and the interviewee are together creating a literary manuscript. If your labor archives is planning to use the material collected or make it available to researchers, it must work out a copyright release which allows the interviewee to turn the material over to the project. If not, it is useless. If the person will not sign a copyright release, I would advise against doing the interview. It takes time and money to do the interview and to transcribe it, and unless you can use the material and make it available to researchers, then you are wasting your time and money. The copyright release is an absolute necessity. The interviewee may be given the opportunity, if he or she desires, to close the interview for a "reasonable" period of time. What is reasonable is something to be negotiated. The interviewee may want to retain publication rights, and that should also be permitted. In return for getting the copyright release, our University of Florida program gives the interviewee a copy of the transcript. The cost should be figured into the total cost of each oral history interview. Our University attorney specified that under Florida law we are entering into a legal contract with the narrator and there had to be an exchange of something of value. The transcript meets that qualification.

Still another important matter is the location of the oral history office. This includes not only a place where regular office business is transacted, but it must also examine the need for storage of the tapes and transcripts. If tapes are to be transcribed, and that is almost a necessity, there has to be space for that activity. Proper tape storage is also a necessity. Tapes need to be curated properly. They cannot be exposed to extremes in temperatures--no higher than ninety degrees or lower than thirty-two degrees. Keep the tapes dry; moisture on tapes can do great damage. One does not yet know the lifetime of tapes. We have some tapes in the UF collection that date to the 1950s and early 1960s, and they still seem to be in order. We have one that was recorded at a political meeting in Lake City, Florida, in the summer of 1950 and all the voices are clear. You must not only protect your tapes--both those that are exposed and those unused in their original packets--but you should use only quality tapes. Get the best that your budget allows. Purchase those with a protective case. Also, use only sixty or ninety minute tapes; the 120 minute tapes are not always satisfactory.

The project will need to make a decision early on about transcribing the material. When oral history first started in the 1940s and early 1950s, it was thought that researchers would only have contact with the tapes--using not only the information, but also listening to the voices. It did not work that way. Researchers are not comfortable depending only on their sense of hearing, they do not know how to work with tapes. One can listen to the voices, but it is not easy to take notes when people are talking on a tape. So very early we realized that we needed to transcribe, if at all possible. Researchers usually have only a limited amount of time. They do not have time to listen to six hours of tape, but they can peruse the transcripts. Transcribing, even using the best equipment, word processors and so on, is slow going and costly. Very few of us speak precisely, except, perhaps, Winston Churchill giving a public address. As a result, all of the transcripts have to be edited carefully and they have to be checked to assure their accuracy. All of this takes time and it takes money.

We use student help at the University of Florida which means that we pay lower per hourly wages than the outside market might demand. Yet even with our labor costs low, we estimate that each oral history interview costs more than $500. Some will be cheaper, but if much travel is involved, the costs can increase. I know that sounds like a large amount, but I do not think it is an exaggerated figure. It is based upon our actual costs, and we try to hold the cost down as low as possible. Please keep that in mind when you are determining your budget, and do not start out without some sort of budget. Have some sort of an assurance that you will be getting support that is dependable. It may be from Florida International University, a private foundation, or from the labor organizations themselves. There is not a lot of public money out there from the National Endowment, or the Florida Endowment, or any of those places to do oral history. You will have to search hard to find money, but doing oral history is so important that it is worth the struggle.

The main thing that I want to re-emphasize is the need to collect, not only taped memories, but everything relating to the rich history of labor in Florida. Letters, diaries, newspaper accounts are all vital documents, but you need to supplement those things by recording people's memories. You are going to find that very few people involved in Florida labor have kept diaries, maintained journals, kept their correspondence, or done other things to document labor history. The rich history of Florida labor in the twentieth century may be lost if you do not collect it. You then have the added responsibility, once it is in your archive, to let the world know that it is there, and that it is accessible. That means cataloging--using library procedures--publishing a catalog, and distributing the information about the availability of your resources.

I hope I am leaving you with an understanding of the immediacy of what you plan to do. Start now. Do not wait until it is too late to talk with the men and women who have knowledge of Florida labor history.

PART TWO

RECOLLECTIONS FROM THE PAST

THE FLORIDA LABOR MOVEMENT FROM A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

THE PRIVATE SECTOR

ANDREW E. DANN SR.

Andrew E. Dann Sr. is Executive Secretary-Treasurer Emeritus of the Florida State Council of Carpenters. President, Carpenters Local 2024 in 1955 and 1974; Financial Secretary Carpenters Local 2024, 1962-74.

I was born in a house on an unpaved street four blocks west and seven blocks south of the center of a small city, situated on a crystal clear bay, protected from the ocean by a series of islands. On the western outskirts, Indians lived in villages bordering the Everglades and this little city was Miami in 1919.

My father's family had moved to Florida in 1842. As a member of the Plumber's Union, my father worked on various hotels built here in the early 1920s. One of my five brothers retired from a Maritime Union as a tugboat captain. Another brother retired after thirty years from the Operating Engineers. My wife was a member of OPEIU Local 128. In 1962, our eldest son was the Outstanding Carpenter Apprentice for the State of Florida and a member of Local Union 2024.

When I was ten years old, I worked in the produce department of a grocery store on Saturdays for eighteen hours from 6:00 a.m. till midnight--for the enormous wage of fifty cents. After school I worked for August Brothers Bakery slicing and wrapping bread for ten cents an hour. I made short trips on my father's tugboat and worked with him one summer, building a new tugboat. In high school I built and repaired display racks for New Yorker Beverages for twenty-five cents an hour. All this work experience up to this time was during the Great Depression; and a person having a job of any kind was considered fortunate. After high school, I worked on the family's tugboats and delivered aviation gas during World War II to the naval air stations on the eastern seaboard as a tug captain.

When our eldest child was school age, I left the sea to raise a family. It was necessary to find another trade and I decided to build my own house in 1950 to get experience in carpentry and learn the building trade and code. After we moved into our new home, I worked as a non-union carpenter and soon learned that the carpenter that did not have a specialty in demand was laid off first.

Checking the job market I found a demand for roof framers, and I learned it as quickly as possible. The company I was working for in 1952 was approached by the union to sign a contract. The company agreed to sign if the union would take their key personnel into the union, if the employees wished to join. As one of the stipulated employees, I was tested and accepted. Since no homes were built during World War II, the returning GIs needed homes. New hotels on Miami Beach covered the oceanfront. South Florida experienced a tremendous building boom in the 1950s.

In 1963, a year after I had been elected financial secretary of Carpenters Local Union 2024, we were notified that all segregated local unions would have to be merged. Carpenters Local Union 1834 was the only black carpentry local in Miami. The local that was selected to accept the black union was very much against the merging. The black union members resented losing their local union identity and the ten white locals resented the forced integration. Although it was controversial, the black local was invited to merge with Local Union 2024.

The black members and the white members were told that there would be no favoritism or special privileges extended to either group. Each group would be respected with dignity as a Local Union 2024 member. The black officers were told that the offices that they held in Local Union 1834 would be forfeited, but all members would be welcome to stand for election at the next scheduled election to be held in three months. A black officer was not elected at that election but a black delegate to the Miami Carpenters District Council and a black delegate to the State Council Convention were elected. In the next regular election, a black officer was elected and results showed that whites voted for blacks and blacks voted for whites. At no time was there an incident involving the merged members or a claim of discrimination. The merger and integration were successfully completed.

During the influx of Cubans to South Florida in the early 1960s, Local Union 2024 was one of the first to welcome them into membership. There were some excellent craftsmen, many of them successful carpenters in Cuba, but the language barrier created a problem. Most of them did not speak or understand English, and few Americans understood or spoke Spanish. Although the Cubans could do the work, their inability to communicate made hazardous conditions on the job and contractors did not want to take the added risk. Until they learned English they found it difficult to get work. When they learned the building code and techniques and could pass the test some became contractors who hired Cuban carpenters. The non-union Latin builders became a part of the construction industry in Dade County.

When I was elected Financial Secretary of Local Union 2024, the Executive Committee instructed me to make myself as knowledgeable as possible in any facet that would benefit the membership because my prime duty was to serve the membership. Through my work in United Way, our members were helped to weather a strike the carpenters had in the mid 1960s. The strike for wages and conditions lasted six weeks. I was trained to be a referral agent to coordinate the assistance the forty-three United Way agencies could give to the striking carpenters. We found ways to extend house payments and car payments and found supplemental temporary work. Fortunately, the movie industry was operating in Dade County, and they agreed to use some of our members as extras in a film.

Near the end of the 1960s, the carpenters once again negotiated a contract when work was plentiful and contractors were charitable. New hotel construction on Miami Beach was behind schedule, and any existing hotel that was six years old was completely stripped and renovated or torn down to be rebuilt. Contractors were working on a cost-plus basis, which translated into the more it cost the more they made. The carpenters signed their contract before the deadline, but the trowel trades were not satisfied with their contract and thought they could negotiate a higher scale. Their six week strike resulted in an additional fifteen cents over a three year contract period. The contract that the carpenters had signed in good faith before the deadline contained a clause that stated that if the general contractor signed the contract with another trade for more than the contract guaranteed the carpenters, then the carpenters would receive the same increase automatically. This was a "me too" clause. It is the only time the contractors ever agreed to it. If we had struck with the trowel trades the fifteen cents increase could not make up the difference for the time lost due to a strike. These negotiations resulted in the largest wage package increase in the history of the carpenters at that time.

In the quest to cut the cost of construction, cutting wages was always the first method used before cutting the cost of material. When lumber was considered too expensive, plywood was substituted. Now plywood is deemed too expensive and chipboard pressed from the by-product of the lumber industry is used. When wood lath became too expensive, rock lath was substituted. Now drywall is standard practice. Each of these changes resulted in lowering the cost of construction, but it also lowered the wage scale by dividing the craft into specialty work produced in an assembly line shop where the wage scale is lower than the outside scale.

In 1967, Florida had 13,000 union carpenters. This increased to 27,000 in the beginning of the 1970s. However, when the 1973 recession gripped the country, union construction decreased from the 90% they had claimed. The non-union segment gained control of construction and now there are less that 10,000 union carpenters in Florida.

As a member of the Dade Federation of Labor, I was asked to serve on the Health Planning Council of Dade County. This council determined the certificates of need for hospitals, nursing homes and health care. The six years of community service resulted in my appointment to the interim governing board for Jackson Memorial Hospital in 1972. In order to legally transfer the administration of the hospital from the Dade County Commissioners to a Public Health Trust, a bill in the Florida Legislature was required. I worked closely with Senator Myers in writing this bill to be sure that the protection of the county employees would be written into the title of the bill, as well as the body of the bill. The 3,500 AFSCME employees of the hospital were assured that their conditions, wages, and benefits would be protected in the transfer from the county to the Public Health Trust. When the Florida Legislature passed the bill, the transfer was orderly and systematic.

The Public Health Trust Board of Trustees were appointed and had full responsibility for setting policy in the operation of the hospital. I served without pay as treasurer of the Trust and as chairman of both the finance and the budget committees. This successful method of operation through the Public Health Trust became a pattern for all the hospitals, namely Shands Hospital in Gainesville, Florida. The annual budget for the hospital [Jackson] is $119 million and a bond issue was sold for an additional $125 million expansion program.

You may have wondered what a carpenter was doing in the financial administration of one of the South's largest hospitals. I was proving to the outstanding business leaders of the community that there is a positive contribution made by labor; that the old stereotype of unionism is a false impression designed to keep the unions under control. While I was donating my time and energy, all construction at the hospital was 100% union. Full-time union employees can portray a valuable public relations role by becoming involved in community service.

GENE C. RUSSO

Gene C. Russo is currently Vice President, District 3 (Southeast Region), of the Communications Workers of America (CWA). He was President of Miami Local 3107 from 1966 to 1972 and held various staff positions in CWA District 3 between 1972-1987.

I was born in New Jersey; not born here. Fortunately for my parents, like many people after the war [World War II], they came to Miami to make their millions. And I came here when I was thirteen and I attended Edison Junior High and Senior High. My mother was a homemaker and my father was a small independent businessman with meat markets within about three, four blocks of here [downtown] on Fifth Street. So it's almost in my back yard.

My first experience with the union was during my summer vacations while going to high school. I worked for High Grade Food Products here on 20th Street and became, at that time, an apprentice butcher for the Meat Cutters Union. That was my first claim to unionism. And then in 1953, at the age of 18, I went to work with Southern Bell. I would like to sit here and tell you how gloriously dedicated I was to the union for signing a card immediately, but I have already been told we have to keep it honest and moral. The real reason is that my sister was a telephone operator, a CWA member, older sister, very militant, and she would not let me go across that gate the first day unless I signed the card. So I signed the card, and I immediately became a normal average union member in CWA. I attended the union meetings when it was the last thing I could find on my list that I could do that night. So I would go whenever I had nothing else to do.

But fortunately when I was nineteen, in 1955, CWA went on strike against Southern Bell. A 72-day strike, very, very bitter. I saw it divide families and--of course I know this was before Charlie Hall was involved, but right within three blocks from here, fire hoses were turned on the striking operators in this building--which became a very big issue. Of course at the same time that we were striking for the 72 days, it was the organizational period of the hotel workers on Miami Beach and they were out on strike for over a year. But it also gave me a taste in my mind, and this may sound strange to you, of being very anti-strike. I have been in many strikes, I am not afraid in my capacity right now to call a strike when it is needed, but the 1955 bitterness of that strike always has stayed with me. And I believe it is such a serious thing, a strike, that I have to look at everything I possibly can because no one really wins, specially in these days. So it has lasted with me.

I became active in the union when I went into the service in 1967. Southern Bell was supposed to pay me the difference of my salary because I was a very good boy and volunteered for service--and they didn't do it. And I wrote to my sister from [the] service and the union won all my back pay and I figured well if the union is that good for someone who never goes to a meeting except when he couldn't get out of it, I thought I would be active for the union. So when I came back out of [the] service, I started attending the meetings and became a typical union member. I started complaining from the first meeting on how it was wrong. And someone told me to quit bitching and get active and I got active. I became a steward in 1958. And I said '67, I am sorry, that was back in the '50s, I'm not that young.

And of course the president who appointed me got defeated right away so I was relegated to a very low role. And that role was I would serve on the COPE committee, the political committee of the local which was not held with very high esteem at that time. And so I joined that committee and everyone resigned within a month, I was the only one left. I became the chairman. So through my tremendous leadership I became the leader of the politics in Dade County for CWA, which was a very political organization. No one else wanted it because it was a dead-end job in the union. Well, I built it up because I was interested in politics and it became a very formidable committee in Dade County.

In the 1960s I became the vice president of that local and then finally the first vice president of the local which gave me the title of Grievance Chairman and it was during that time that I really made my name known in the local which was processing grievances and there was a time in 1964 when I had won approximately about 119 straight job promotion grievances with a lot of back pay and Southern Bell decided to promote me over about fifty or sixty senior people which was not a kind gesture on their part, but one to destroy me. And I was fortunate enough to file a grievance, handle the grievance, and demote myself. And it just so happened that was the year the election for president was open. It was probably one of the greatest campaign gimmicks I could ever think of and I was elected overwhelmingly as the man who was so dedicated he would demote himself from a job. And so I took over the presidency of the South Florida local of CWA from Miami all the way to Key West and it was in the beginning years of the tremendous build-up in South Florida. When I took over in 1966 we had 2,600 members and when I left six years later we had in excess of 6,000 members. So it was a growth period, it was also a period of Dade County's growth and I was fortunate enough during those six years' time to have two Republican National Conventions, one Democratic National Convention, and of course, imports from all over the United States working for the Bell System and so I was able to get a lot of experience and exposure.

During that time, when I was very young--our local had come out of the old CIO and it was right after the merger of the AFL-CIO--our local happened to have the president of CIO and IBEW had the president of the AFL, who was Frank Roach. CWA and IBEW didn't talk, anyway, and the CIO didn't talk with the AFL, so it was a very bitter merger. And being the IBEW took over the presidency, my local was not very pro

AFL-CIO. So the president who took over after I was duly appointed never did affiliate with the Florida AFL-CIO and it was very controversial at that time. But I was fortunate in that during the time that I was active, people think of just short strikes here but I would like to give you a list of things that happened that really helped me become what I think is ingrained that there is nothing easy in the labor movement.

Number one, I can remember the *Miami Herald* going on strike in, maybe, 1950 and when I left in 1972 it was still on strike. The Florida East Coast strike which went on for twenty years. The Hotel and Restaurant Workers of which Joe [Kaplan] probably knows about more than anybody, went on for a year or two years before that. W.Q. Fraser, I believe, I remember was the dynamic leader of that strike and so there was a lot of really hard times down there. Looking at the tapes reminded me of the Miami transit strike. The county bought the bus company during negotiations, forced the union to strike illegally and broke the union. That strike was very popular because it was the first time I ever met George Meany. He came to a massive rally in Bayfront Park Auditorium in support of the transit workers.

So it really was a tremendous history here in South Florida, very few people realize what has happened. I feel fortunate that I came here at a young age, got involved in it, and still what I feel remarkably young for the labor movement to have seen all of this transpire. Thomas Wolfe says you can't go home again and I say you can as long as it's only for a visit. I don't think I would ever want to move back here but I wouldn't give anything--all the money in the world could not take away the experience and what happened in South Florida in the labor history and for what we have been able to gain. It's given me the insight to now be where I never thought I would be--to lead an organization with over 100,000 people from the southeast. To be able to look back and say that I was here when the labor movement was built, I'm here now, and I am going leave it a much better place than the way I found it.

PERNELL PARKER

Pernell Parker has served as a member of the Florida bargaining committee and team for United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO and has been the Florida Administrator for the Martin Luther King Jr. Health Fund.

I'm Pernell Parker from Avon Park, Florida, and I am a resident of Georgia. Marshall Barry wanted to know why I'm in Florida, but I told him that was a secret. I'm an organizer and I've been organizing with Coke for seventeen years.

And the first contract that I remember was handed down to us during the Seventies. And so at that time, Mack Lyons was here in the state of Florida. We all farmworkers sat together. We said, "Mack, why don't the company want to give us something or other. We didn't like that." He said, "What you all going to do?" We said, "We want to meet with the company and tell them what we want. We doing the work, they got the money, but we got the labor."

So when it comes down to negotiating for the second contract, it was pretty hard, and it wasn't easy. Some of us had to suffer; some of us had to go to Tallahassee to fight Tallahassee; and also fight Coke, too. And on my . . . going to Tallahassee when hell broke out again. When the HB 74 come out. That means that it will not be no union in the state of Florida, period. *[HB 74 was a bill introduced with the purpose of outlawing hiring halls in agriculture. The hiring hall was the basis for organizing and control by the United Farm Workers.]*

So, we had a fellow, a young fellow from South Florida, down here, who got beat up at one of these camps. So we got him to come up and testify. He didn't want to testify. So he likes his jugs. You know, his jugs. Guess you understand what I mean. So, I told him, "Why you don't want to get up and testify?" He says, "Man, they might see me on TV, hurt my sister, hurt my family." And so he says, "I'm nervous." I say, "What will it take to make you normal?" He says, "Man, I need a little jug." In Tallahassee there happened to be a liquor store and I got him a jug and he drunk it. And I could hardly get him to quit talking.

And so after that, after that, one of the senators come out there, I don't know who he was, he told me that you all win it. I said that's what we come up here, to win it. So, we went to come on back to Avon Park. And hell break out again and we had to come back to Tallahassee. Some of the members had cars. Some of the people didn't have money. So what we did as a big little family and organize ourselves is to put all the money in one pot and let's go back to Tallahassee.

What did we want? We wanted the voting rights system and collective bargaining. We win it in the House of Representatives--[they] passed it, but the Senate, they rejected it. That's where we found out who were our good brothers and who were are our bad brothers. And our bad brothers is in the Senate. Half of those in the Senate is uncle, kinfolk and cousins.

So, we come on back to Avon Park. We couldn't do nothing now. So, when we had to negotiate the contract with Coke. See, Coke don't want to talk with their workers. Period. They just want to say, "Here, go to work." But since we got a union contract for the last seventeen years, it's not like that. We sit down with the company and tell them what we want. And sometimes we get it, and sometimes we don't. But if it wasn't right for them, then we go back to the membership and we tell them how Coke is acting. They said, "No, we are going to fight for it. Go back to the table."

So otherwise, that mean that we got to turn around; negotiate; then, come back and tell them [Coke] that the members are your workers. That's what they want. That's what they're gonna fight. So, it was back down there. About three months I wanted a contract. So we had to go to them. You come back to Avon Park to the hiring hall and reorganize ourselves. So then we were planning on going to Atlanta to demonstrate against Coke. But not at that point of time.

So what happens, the *Tampa Tribune* put out a paper that said that Paul Austin was coming to Tampa. He's over the Florida District Foods Division [of Coca-Cola]. So one of the members picked up the paper and found it. Thought he'd leave over to Tampa--over to the club where Paul Austin was coming. And so Mack said we all should go over there at one time. So we went over there. So we went over there; it's about a 100 of us. When we got over there, they wouldn't even let us pray. They had a bunch of preachers in there at that meeting, and they wouldn't let us pray. Throwing us out. Wouldn't let us come in there. And so--weren't but a hundred farm workers elected at that time--and every cop, detective, were around us farm workers. That's right. For what? For what you believe in is right? We just want to see the boss of the Coca-Cola Foods Division. That's all. But they wouldn't let us see him. They sneaked him out the back. So we let that go.

So we come on back to Avon Park hiring hall. We had to pick up another straggler. And so we went on. So Mack Lyons, he was in charge of the farmworkers in Florida at that time. So one of the members says, "I tell you what, I go to Houston." So one of the workers say, "I tell you Mack, we go to Atlanta." Another--"So we come to Miami." So we just split up by ourselves. So there weren't no money involved. We did the best we can. So when the fella that went to Houston tried to play a hex on Coke, which is the head of the Coca-Cola Food Division. When he go to Houston--get with one of the newsmen and maybe he can help me get into the Houston Building. So this is what the fellow in Houston had did.

And when he got in there, start banging up with all these big shots and everything and he got up and spoke and say, "I'm from Florida." In about five minutes they said, "There's a bomb in the building." Everybody coming out. "It's a bomb in the building!" So he said, "Okay, you don't want to talk with me. I'll pick your fruit and everything. You don't want to talk some, I'm going back to Florida."

So he come on back to Florida. When he got back to Florida he told us about it. So we decided we'd go to Atlanta. And Mack sent Paul Austin--at that time a letter said that he was coming to Atlanta. So when Mack and the workers got their return letter, Paul Austin was gone. So he never did come. So here come up another company offer from Houston. He gonna come back to Florida and sell the contract. Mack told him, "Yeah, that's all right, but there ain't gonna be no changes. It's just be the same thing that I left Florida with." When I go back there, we come back to Florida and some more hell broke out. Just look like every day, every week, something breaking out. So we kind of cooled down. We told Mack, "Cool down." We got to pick up something with Coca-Cola. He said, "Okay." So we go to work to try to get us a little money to help us out. Here the company want to take food from us out of the tub we pick.

I'll pick 'em up a box of food. But that's all right. The pickers are stirred up, worried. But wait, you paying us by the box. But you say the fruit is not weighing out. Well, they ain't weighing out. So we come back to the union hall and hold a big meeting, about 1,200 of us. So Mac says, "What you going to do?" We say, "We going to go to arbitration. So he says, "Okay." He say, "We got to settle it once and for all." So we went to arbitration. So we won arbitration with this fella here [Joe Kaplan]. So he got a lot of fruit home but I know he couldn't eat all the fruit, so he took it home.

So after that, we had to think of something else for Coca-Cola. After arbitration, I told Mack, I told Marshall [Barry] this. This thing here, they're going to try to take that money back from us. Eighty million boxes of fruit that Coke had took from the pickers. It never was on the payroll. So they had to pay off all that amount of excess fruit that they took from us.

So the next contract come up. This is the third one. Then they figure all the little tactics and try to take it back from us. I give you 5 cents on that. I give you 5 cents on that. No. So we come back. We said just forget about negotiating. We'll be back. We call you back when you ready for a change. So we come back, we had a meeting with the 600 members that we had at that time in that particular area. We told them about it. We go back to the table. They went back to the table and they didn't speak nothing. So Coke, no, no. It's okay. We'll let you know when we ready to negotiate again. So it was maybe about three weeks, maybe a month Coke began to get worried because they didn't know what our next step was with 1,200 workers. You don't know where we're going to hit on them. We didn't have no power. We didn't have no money. But we had labor. And so, one of the field riders come and told me, he said, "What you all trying to do, trying to make Coke break up?" I said, "No, nothing, but we want a decent living. Decent wages. For any decent person." So he went on back--he told Coke. Which we know he did.

So what happened there be hell broke out again at that same year. We want the voting right system. Coke turned right back around and sent a representative from Ben Hill Griffin, from the chain commercial. So this guy who got up there in the Senate to testify for this here voting right, when the senator say if you vote for it, you gonna vote all the food off your table. So how in the world, if you are going to vote for one little bill you're going to vote all the food off his table. And we understand that. So we see why that one wasn't working.

We come on back, come on back to Avon Park. We settle down, mumble around and later on things began to get bored. In a week, membership started calling us. Some of us didn't have anything to do. So Diana Lyons come up with a suggestion. She said, "Did you all draw unemployment?" I said, "No, farmworkers don't." So we go back to Tallahassee, again, and told the House of Representatives. That's why the people in Highland County and Polk County are drawing unemployment after the season's over--just on account of that. So we'll win that case. And later on you're going to have to take the heat. It's not easy. Because I've been with it for seventeen years. I got run off the camp, by mean people. Right there up in Clewiston, Chapman. People come into the camp and call the police. "Get out of the way, they's my worker, we don't need no organizer." There's nothing you can do. We had to move, because Florida got a trespassing law. And so we were sorry we couldn't do nothing to organize.

So we tried down here in South Dade, one of the most racist counties in the world. You better be out of there before night. Because if you don't get out in the middle, you may never get out. The lady at the camp down there brought second hand bread from Clewiston; bringing it down to the camps. So we come on back to Clewiston. Well, my time is up.

One thing I want to tell all you sisters and brothers. Just before I leave, and I'm really serious about this. And I've seen them, a lot of pictures of them, and I'm sure. Whatever you do, if you buy bananas, grapes, oranges, pineapples, make sure you wash it because there is pesticide on them. Thank you.

JOSEPH H. KAPLAN

Joseph H. Kaplan, labor lawyer, has practiced labor law since admission to the Florida Bar in 1955, representing labor unions and employees before federal and state courts and agencies.

I don't think that I have this oral history down pat, yet. I don't know if recollections from the past mean I have to tell you about myself, which is so ego gratifying to me, or about the cases that I handled or the people I met, which merely makes me feel I've grown older. I guess that we have to combine both of those activities.

So let me tell you a little bit about myself. I was born, I went to college, I went into the Air Force, and my life began when I became a union lawyer in 1955. Prior to that when I was in law school, I started to work for a fascinating person connected with the labor movement in Florida. I refer to Lucille Snowden. And I have before me an article from a Lakeland newspaper written about Lucille Snowden in 1957. It talks about Lucille's work in Lakeland during the strike of the chemical workers against the Virginia Carolina Corporation. Lucille at that time was thirty-seven years old, as the newspaper reports, and it tells about her life.

I had started working with Lucille as a clerk in 1953, and when I graduated from the University of Miami and passed the Bar, I went to work for her as an Associate. This newspaper article tells about the wonderful Lucille Snowden and her life, through law school were she graduated top of her class in 1947, one of three women in the University of Miami Law School class; a farm girl from Wayne, Ohio, who worked her way through law school as a cocktail waitress in one of the gambling joints in Sunny Isles.

The article talks about her life and what she is now doing. And it reports how she employs a recent law graduate as a junior clerk in her firm that specializes in labor relations, unemployment claims, and contracts and negotiations. I was that recent law graduate.

The article goes on to describe some of the work that she did, and it says that she has a record of no outstanding permanent injunctions. Now, that is a really remarkable commentary on the labor history in this state: the most significant labor law thing this woman did was garnering a record of no outstanding permanent injunctions. Although that sounds strange now, the truth is that back in the early and middle fifties a union attorney's major job in Florida was to stop the use of injunctions to prevent union activities such as strikes and picketing.

After Lucille left, I took over her practice which covered from the Panhandle to Key West, defending unions mostly in injunction suits. That was our major activity back then. There were very few labor contracts in existence and when they were written, in the building trades, for example, they were prepared as simple two-page documents, establishing what the wage would be and what the overtime rate would be.

The news article also goes on to give another comment of interest on the history of labor law practice back in the fifties, when it says "for some of her union work she is paid up to $100 a day." What a remarkable record of the growth of labor law in Florida, considering how lawyers' fees have grown.

Looking back in my mind's eye over the years that I practiced labor law after Lucille left, I remember that during the fifties we had a major strike in the hotel industry. I will discuss this with you in a moment, but now let me relate in general terms what the labor picture was like.

In the fifties, there was much work developing in the industrial sector here. Contracts were beginning to be negotiated with the concomitant development of a union labor relations environment. There were the activities of the building and construction trades unions. There were extensive activities in retail and tourist industries, the airline industry began organizing, and communication workers began spreading their wings.

In the sixties, it was a momentous period of growing political sophistication by the unions as the merger of the AFL-CIO created a huge and powerful political organization in the state. The seventies were marked by the development of public sector unions. Then we went into the awful eighties, when, except for the enormous growth of the public sector labor unions, many unions, including those in the construction industry, felt the impact of the PATCO massacre and started to see a decline, where union membership and contracts fell off dramatically.

In the hotel industry, the strike in the fifties led to a strong and vibrant union movement. But what happened in that industry since then may be seen as an example of what has happened to the labor movement in general in Florida.

That strike began in 1954 when twenty-two hotels were organized by a new hotel workers union. After a very vigorous organizing drive, demands for recognition were made on the hotel owners in 1955 which led to a strike which lasted for about a year. The major legal stumbling block was that the National Labor Relations Board had declined to exercise jurisdiction in the hotel industry, as they had declined to exercise jurisdiction in a lot of industries including, for example, sports activity. Well, without there being any kind of state law giving employees rights of collective bargaining and with the National Labor Relations Board refusing to give hotel employees any federal rights at all, the workers were at the mercy of owners of the hotels. Their working conditions were so bad that the union decided that it had to fight as hard as it could because the gamble was worth it. There were no legal protections, almost a replay of the pre-Wagner Act days when workers had to organize and merely hope that by their effort and the threat of a strike or boycott, they might be able to force decent working conditions.

The union picketed when their demand for voluntary recognition was refused. The hotels brought us to court. After we won an injunction suit at the trial level, they appealed. The Florida Supreme Court made a decision which was the first one of its kind in the United States and was never again repeated. They decided that the union could not picket any of the hotels unless they first proved to the hotels that they represented the workers. Now that was not the law and it never was the law. Indeed, there has been a great deal of speculation among labor observers that the Florida Supreme Court was improperly persuaded to arrive at such a crazy rule. Twenty-two rich hotels were benefited by this decision and an injunction was then issued against the picketing of those hotels.

Well, what we decided to do then, because this crazy decision required us to prove to the hotels that we represented "at least some" of the employees, since there was no election procedure and the hotels weren't permitting us to do anything to demonstrate to them that we represented the workers, was to take the depositions of 700 workers. I hold here a copy of the hotel employee newspaper of February 12, 1956, which has photographs of myself and Carrington Grammling, the other union attorney involved, and Darry Davis, who worked in the firm of Sibley and Davis, the hotels' attorney (incidentally, Mr. Davis became the first county attorney when Metro started out). This is a photograph of us taking the deposition of one worker. We all looked so earnest and young. Each deposition was very short: "Give us your name, your address, who do you work for, and does this union represent you for purposes of collective bargaining." Once we got the depositions and then mathematically proved we represented a majority of the employees at the various hotels these people worked for, we put our pickets up and challenged the hotels to go for another injunction against us, because we proved we met the test of the Supreme Court. A test they believed we could never meet. This time their injunction suit was unsuccessful.

The strike continued until the United States Supreme Court condemned the National Labor Relations Board in the Sax decision, for refusing to exercise jurisdiction in the hotel industry. As a consequence, the Court ordered the National Labor Relations Board to assume jurisdiction in that industry; and as a result, the hotel industry was put under the Taft-Hartley Act, Board-run elections were conducted, the union won every single election and contracts were negotiated and signed.

From the fifties until now the hotel union went through a cycle of growth and power to a diminishment of membership and strength. The dispute the union had with Abe Hirschfeld of the Castle Hotel last year, a battle they never would have had ten years ago, is like the story of labor's ups and downs in Florida. Hirschfeld would not have dared treat his workers and the union so shabbily ten years ago and did so last year only because he thought the union would give up. The fact that the union dug into its fiber and found the will and the energy to fight (successfully) may be a prelude to a reinvigorated labor movement in the nineties.

This hotel experience in the past thirty years is a microcosm of the development of the labor union movement in the state of Florida, if not the country, during the same period. Perhaps the current revitalization of the union is a precursor for the future.

As I look back and see the development of my clients, I am left, of course, with very poignant memories of people I have known and experiences we have had.

It seems to me that if there is any one kind of thought that best expresses my feelings about the work I've done, I could point out my experience with the carpenters union. If the carpenters needed me, I was there for 35 years, but to be truthful, I was merely a servant of the union; I must admit the union didn't really need me. The construction industry accepted the union. The people who were contractors and who employed carpenters were, themselves, former union construction workers. The union could have succeeded even without me. Similarly, if the fire fighters needed a union lawyer, I was, of course, happy to serve them, but they didn't really need me. The fact is fire fighters had a great deal of public acceptance and political power and union lawyers were good to have, but not crucial.

The people who really need people like us, people like me and Marshall Barry, are workers who have not been accepted into the mainstream of life or who don't have much power. This group of people really need us. So if I have any feeling of gratification for being involved in the labor movement all these years, it is mostly when I look back at the efforts of the United Farm Workers in the state of Florida. My work with Marshall Barry on UFW projects, work which was very crucial to the people we represented, gives me a great deal of remembered satisfaction and purposefulness. I am grateful and proud to have represented unions; but I am deeply touched by the needs of unions like the UFW.

As a footnote to that, I am sad that the UFW hasn't expanded their activities to other areas of the farm worker movement in Florida.

Incidentally, I volunteer to give FIU all of my files and all of my collection of newspapers and photographs of my years as a union lawyer. I am confident that we can be helpful in the development of a labor archives. It is certainly about time that it is done.

I am grateful to be asked to participate here, a little sad that I have reached the age when I might remember a little more than others, but anxious to see how we close out the century.

THE PUBLIC SECTOR

GILBERT L. PORTER

Gilbert L. Porter was President of the West Florida Teachers' Association from 1936 to 1939. He later served as the Executive Secretary of the Florida State Teachers' Association from 1954 to 1965. From 1965 to 1973 he was the Assistant to the Superintendent, Dade County Public Schools, and between 1975 and 1982 he served on the Florida State Career Service Commission.

My name is Gilbert Lawrence Porter. I was born in Baldwin City, Kansas, on January 6, 1909. I lived with my father and grandparents. Both of my grandparents were born in slavery, but were freed when Kansas Territory was opened up to freed slaves. My mother died when I was quite young.

I started to work when I was ten years old delivering the *Kansas City Star* once per day. I worked part time at the Baldwin Garage after school hours. Before graduating from high school, I also worked in a grocery store after school and on Saturdays. After graduating from Baldwin High School, I worked during the summers for the Santa Fe Railroad. I also worked for the Union Pacific Railroad one summer trying to earn some money to enter college. There were no unions in Kansas where Negroes could join. I had heard about A. Philip Randolph's organizing the Sleeping Car Porters Union, but that was in the larger cities.

After graduating from Baldwin High School, I was not sure whether or not I would be able to attend college. I had an uncle who finished Baker University in Baldwin, and who had worked in Kansas City for two years coaching athletics. Subsequently, he was appointed to coach and teach at Talladega College, Talladega, Alabama. My uncle was able to secure a scholarship for me to attend Talladega College.

At Talledega College I majored in chemistry and had a minor in physical education. I graduated in 1932. In 1932 work was scarce all over the country. We were in one of the worst depressions this country had ever faced. There weren't any jobs anywhere. Everybody in my little town knew me. The only train that went through there was once a day to Santa Fe. The man who was in charge of the railroad was also the telegraph operator. Everybody knew that I was looking for a job, so when a telegram came in from Sarasota saying they were looking for a science teacher, I didn't answer the telegram, he did. Soon I was accepted and on my way. All of them were trying to get rid of me. But I was glad and everybody else was, too. I had never ridden a train so far and so long in my life. From Baldwin City, Kansas, to Sarasota, Florida, is a long way. I thought we would never get there, but finally after about three and one-half days we made it.

We started working, trying to work with nothing. I did not even have any test tubes. In addition to teaching science, I also coached in the Sarasota Public Schools. We had a financial crisis all over this country and Florida was no exception. The state was so strapped for money that only a few schools could operate the full year. In Sarasota we worked two and a half months without receiving any pay. When we did get paid we were only paid for two and one-half weeks. At the end of five and one-half months, Sarasota closed all of the schools for black students. The Chamber of Commerce raised enough money to keep the white schools open for the full term. All we could cash were our suitcases and try to go somewhere else. I did not know where to go, but I did not think I was going to stay in Florida. I decided that I'd go up to Florida A&M and go back to school. And that is what I did.

I guess I was the first graduate student at Florida A & M. They did not offer any graduate work and I had already finished college. But I studied there for two semesters. Finally, I got a job in Walton County. It was one of the most interesting places I had ever been in my life. Walton County was settled by Scotch Presbyterians in 1840. Now they were not going to give you much, but whatever they told you they were going to give you, you got. They took great pride in telling the truth. They were good people. And I got along fine.

I went there to build a high school. I was appointed principal of Tivoli Junior High School at DeFuniak Springs, Florida. We were able to build this school into a full high school, and then I moved on to the principalship of Lincoln High School in Tallahassee. Lincoln High School was one of the first academies for Blacks that was built in Florida. During my tenure at Lincoln High School, we were able to get Lincoln accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. At that time there were only three senior high schools for black students on the accredited list.

The two institutions that were supposed to be for higher education for Blacks were Lincoln Academy in Tallahassee and another school in Gainesville set up by the legislature to instruct black teachers during July and August. They got two months training, and after this two months training they received first, second, or third grade certificates. That was the extent of the education. We turned down 331 teachers at that time.

In 1954 I left Lincoln High School to become the first full-time paid Executive Secretary of the Florida State Teachers Association. The annual dues were $2.50 per member. There were approximately 5,585 black teachers in the state and not all them were members of the FSTA.

The Florida State Teachers Association had been formed in 1890. During the first decade of the twentieth century a major emphasis of early FSTA meetings with results began to be seen. We were looking for black teachers who could be trained and would study. The records show that of the 1,713 black teachers in the public schools in Florida, 223, or 30 percent had graduated from normal schools or at least had some normal school training. I began working with FSTA in 1933 and during the next few years I held just about every office in the Association except treasurer.

During the period 1954-1962, FSTA's membership grew from 6,310 to 9,704. FSTA not only increased its membership, but there was also a tremendous increase in teachers wanting to improve their qualifications and standards. The leadership was fighting to see that every teacher received a written contract. Salaries started improving. Teachers found out that by using the courts they could secure some of the benefits that they had been denied in the past. As FSTA became better organized, they found out that it paid them to learn to fight for what they needed. We began to see the real benefits in having a closely organized group working for the best interests of the entire group.

For seventy-six years the Florida State Teachers Association endeavored to unite black teachers in common causes and provide high quality leadership in its work for professional improvement of our teachers in Florida. I have attempted to trace the development of the Association, its struggles, successes, and failures from the beginning in 1890 to the merger with the Florida Education Association in 1966.

RODNEY DAVIS

Rodney Davis is currently a consultant for FEA/United. He was a teacher and principal in the Sarasota public schools, 1951-68. He served on the FEA Board in 1968 and held various staff positions in FEA/United, 1968-82. From 1981-84 he was State Administrator of Teacher Certification.

I was born not too far from here, in Jackson Memorial Hospital, in 1926. As I look at this group, I am reminded there are three ages of people. There is youth, there is middle age, and there is "gosh you look good." And I find myself saying that more and more as I meet with my contemporaries.

I went to school here in Coral Gables and I was asked to think about what got me into the labor movement. Really, that was hard for me to do. I envied some of you people. I think Gene's [Gene Russo] sister got him his first union card and insisted that he have his first union card. I didn't have that easy a route. My father was an electrical engineer and at least from the conversations we had at the dinner table at night, he never really considered himself management. When he referred to the officers of the Florida Power and Light Company it was not in kindly terms. I assumed that even though he was considered a professional person he didn't consider himself to be management. I know that he was called out in the night many times to assist in trying to settle bargaining contracts with linemen, of which he had been one before he was an engineer. My mother was a very fair person and taught me to do what was right and fair. He [my father] thought John L. Lewis was one of the finest union people that had lived because of what he had done for the mineworkers.

That was really all I had in the way of a union background until I got involved as a teacher. And you know teachers didn't think they were protesting, they were told they were professionals. We didn't get to set our own fees like doctors do and other true professionals. But we believed we were and I joined the teachers association mainly because it was $4.00 dues and that bought you an awfully good magazine. I didn't really do much in the union until one time I suddenly woke up and discovered our salaries were really low. I got myself appointed to a salary committee. Then I discovered that they [the School Board] only gave us the salary that they wanted to give us. They had hoped the salary committee would come up with an answer based on the money that they were willing to give out.

I might say, too, that I started my career in St. Augustine in the middle of the year and then I went to Sarasota. In 1951 almost twenty years after you [Gilbert Porter] served. I started out in a new school as a chemistry person who went in to teach science. I started out with a box of paper clips, a ream of duplicator paper and some spirit masters--those purple things that you write on and which gets the purple dye all over you. I had that, two pieces of chalk and an eraser, and some old textbooks that were antiquated. And this was a white school, twenty years later in Sarasota County, which is supposed to be a very prosperous county. It didn't have money back in those days.

Interestingly enough, in those days everybody from the state superintendent on down was a member of the teachers' association [Florida Board Association] and spoke very proudly of it. I can remember the first year I taught in Sarasota, we went to the first county-wide meeting and the superintendent stood up and said, "Well, as you know, it's been our custom in Sarasota to have 100 percent membership in the FEA, and I'll assume that we will continue that custom and you will find that out of your second paycheck (they were nice enough in the twenty years, Gilbert, to take money out of your second paycheck) that your annual dues have been taken out." I thought to myself, "Well, that doesn't sound like it's right--you're supposed to sign a slip of paper saying what comes out of your salary."

He says, "If there are no objections"--some fellow in the back of the room really had courage. He said, "I object." Well you, couldn't have kicked the superintendent in the groin and hurt him any worse, because he just looked so pained. And he said, "Well, if that's the case, then we won't have 100 percent membership." Oh boy, he was really upset. I later found out that if we had 100 percent membership, you got six or eight extra members to go to the annual convention. And of course they were all people from the superintendent's staff who went to the annual convention.

But anyhow, through the years when I got to be an elementary principal, we went to a regional FEA meeting and we were very dissatisfied with what happened in the Legislature. This was about 1961-62. Well, over that period of time it was the elementary school principals who really were the backbone of the FEA and the Florida teachers' strike in 1968. Now that sounds funny. I guess you'd say, "Well, it got messed up so bad, no wonder. Because administrators ran it." But, the reason, of course, the administrators ran the teachers' association (FEA). Now, it was mostly principals and most principals, to be frank with you, didn't consider ourselves as administrators. We considered ourselves more as lieutenants in the field, using Army terms. We didn't consider ourselves as headquarters brass.

In the 1968 walkout, and I use the term walkout because the '68 constitution said it was illegal for public employees to strike. It said they could organize but they didn't have the right to strike, were prohibited from striking. Well, teachers are very law abiding--they teach following law and order and everything. The leadership felt we had a problem. We called in our attorneys and they said, "Well, no, you can't strike, but they can quit.

So we organized a campaign to collect resignations. We had movies; we had regional meetings; we had local meetings. It was highly organized. We did a good job, I thought, of organizing for a group of principals who didn't know how to carry on a strike. We got some 30,000 undated resignations. Now these people (teachers) are pretty conservative people, and they put on the line that they would resign.

Now we had some help from Governor Kirk, who you may remember, those of you who were here then, when the strike started he was shown in the newspaper picture walking hand-in-hand at Disneyland with Mickey and Minnie Mouse. He did come back to the state eventually when we struck.

We organized--we had 30,000 people go to the Tangerine Bowl. Now that is 30,000 people, everybody with a Bachelor's degree or more. Because it was just teachers and administrators in those days. Today, now that we are a union, we have wall-to-wall coverage. We have all employees in the same union in many of our locals. But that is another story. The teachers' union movement, really, in the public sector, and I only know the teachers' union aspect of it, is new. Of course, once administrators did get involved it didn't take school boards long to say, "Whoa! you're management. And if you don't report back, you'll be fired." And a lot of us were. I was. I didn't get my job back. I lost it.

It was pretty disruptive for a while to everybody. I have a million horror stories--some funny and some awful. Most of them not as awful as the migrant farmworkers, but they were pretty bad for a young, innocent group of teachers. Split up a lot of families--that type of thing--all those things that happen in a strike.

But, it did awaken teachers to the union movement, eventually. In Florida we had a merger prior to the walkout [between] the black and white [teacher] organizations. And that was interesting. When Peggy asked me, I told her I could talk more than ten minutes on just the merger. But it was an interesting one. It involved a lot of trust. The black organization was an excellent organization. Dr. Porter was their executive secretary for many years and brought it up into the modern world, built a new building. That building is still owned today by the teachers' organization (FEA).

The next merger we had was to merge with the AFL-CIO. And that happened in the '70s, right after we had a collective bargaining law. The teachers' strike, I think, did help us. The labor movement helped get in the new Florida constitution that language which allowed public employees to bargain. But it took us until after the teachers' strike for the Legislature to see they'd better do something about a law, because they knew that if we struck once, we might do it again.

The merger with the union was interesting. The National Education Association, which FEA was affiliated with, had an observer at our merger talks and agreed to it. All of a sudden, he was called home to Washington, D.C. The National Education Association discovered that since New York had merged with the AFT [American Federation of Teachers' affiliate of AFL-CIO], and if Florida went, and California which was going that way, too, they better do something to stop it. So they said, "If you merge, we'll kick you out." We merged. They kicked us out. They not only kicked us out, they sued us, too.

It's interesting--I always thought the worst wars in the labor movement were against management, but I can tell you that some of the internecine wars are just as vicious--I mean it still goes on today. Thousands and millions of dollars of teachers' dues are spent by the NEA and the AFT fighting to see who's going to represent teachers. Now most of labor is beginning to work together--they have some agreements where they don't try to step all over each other. But we (teacher unions) are young in the labor movement. We are probably making all the mistakes others have made. I mean everybody can see that we are going through the same steps that the AFL-CIO and the others have gone through themselves. Hopefully, we ought to learn from past history, but we don't seem to. And I'll stop there.

CHARLES A. HALL

Charles Hall is Program Director at the Center for Labor Research and Studies, Florida International University (1979-present) and a member of AAA Labor Arbitration Panel. He is a former International Vice President of the International Association of Fire Fighters, (1968-79) and President of Miami Local 587, IAFF (1966-68).

I was born here in 1930, in a little frame house up on blocks about seven or eight miles from here [downtown]. My family was very poor. Couldn't afford to go to hospitals--you were very lucky Rod [Davis], you were able to go to a hospital. I wasn't able to go to hospital. Went to local school here, graduated from Miami Edison High. And at that time, of course this was a very segregated community in those days, those of you who have lived here know about it. The Ku Klux Klan used to have rallies on Northwest Seventh Avenue and Twenty-eighth Street on a fairly regular basis; whenever they thought the black community was "acting up" they would have a little rally over there to quiet things down a bit. But that's the kind of community this was.

I went to work for the Miami Fire Department in 1952 and had no idea that I'd be involved in the labor movement. I was just out of high school, looking for a job. We [the firefighters union] got involved in some litigation which was a class action suit against the city involving our pension system. I signed on as one of the people on that suit. As a result of that I started doing some work with the union. I sort of worked my way up through the lower echelons of the union, starting out as a sergeant-at-arms for the union, working up to vice president. In 1966, I became president of the local. At that time the process by which the union member received wage increases was a thing we liked to call collective begging. We would get on the telephone and call the members up and say, "The budget hearing is going to be Wednesday afternoon and we want everybody down there to raise hell at the budget meeting. We're asking for an increase." And the reaction of the commission was somewhat like the treatment given the civil rights movement: that we love you, my wife Julie May loves you, and we know that you are doing a good job, and you deserve a raise but we don't have any money. And that persisted--that paternalistic attitude persisted in the public sector for many many years until the advent of collective bargaining.

We said we have to do something about this, we have to get active politically or we can't make any changes in the quality of our lives. So we did get involved. In the three years that I was president of the local we were able to achieve a fifty percent increase in wages in a three-year period, plus some changes in the work week. In 1967, the state organization asked me to begin lobbying for them. I began to lobby in

Tallahassee for the state organization in 1967. We passed the first state collective bargaining law, which passed in 1967. This was the Fire Fighters Collective Bargaining Act and it only affected fire fighters and it didn't affect any other part of the public sector--and only fire fighters in the three larger counties in Florida. It was a population act. In those days you were allowed to have population acts. They repealed all the population acts in the state later on.

That law came under some attack as a result of an old 1947 Miami Water Works case which you'd be familiar with Joe [Kaplan]. They tested the language of the old constitution, which had a provision in the human rights section, which said all employees had a right to collective bargaining. And they said, "Well, we certainly fit that category, we are employees and we want to bargain with the city." And the city eventually went to the Florida Supreme Court for an interpretation of that language. And the court said, "Well, it may say all employees but it was never intended to mean public employees." We were concerned about that decision, because we already had a collective bargaining law on the books.

In 1968, when the Constitutional Revision Commission was impaneled, Justice B.K. Roberts of the Supreme Court was the chairman of the human rights sub-committee of the Constitutional Revision Committee. And we went before the sub-committee, myself and a fellow named Tony Fontana, who some of you might know, who also later became a legislator, and asked them to insert in the constitution--in the revision process--after the word, employee, "all employees public and private." Just a simple little change. They considered that and they came back to us and said, "Look, we are willing to put that in the constitution but we want to make sure that there are no strikes. So we want to add the words, "provided however, public employees shall not have the right to strike." Well, we weren't in a very good negotiating position and we had to accept that even though we felt, basically, that we had the right to strike. You can't require someone to work against their will. That was the concept we believed in. Even though we weren't talking about strike we knew that it would be very detrimental to our interest if we did.

However, that provision came out of the Constitutional Revision Commission intact and went to the Florida Legislature for their consideration. Now this is 1968. As Rod [Davis] mentioned this thing was moving along pretty well through the legislature. We didn't think we were going to have any problem with it--and then the teachers went out on strike. And everybody started saying, "Hey look at this thing here, this is going to give teachers the right to bargain. We better knock that out." There were four or five amendments offered on the floor. One by Don Reed, from Palm Beach County, to kill it. And we survived those amendments by only one vote. We survived the final passage by only one vote. And people switched sides on some of the amendments.

We were really panic-stricken by the whole thing. We're standing in front of the doors of the legislature telling our friends, "Please don't leave." Those of you have been in the legislature know that the urge to use the restroom can be very great at a time when there is a real important piece of legislation up there. You have to keep your friends in there, and we were begging them, "Please don't leave now." Well, "I got a very important phone call" or "I have to go, somebody is trying to contact me." But we said, "Please stay in for this vote." And they did--and we won.

Following the passage of that legislation we said, we got it made, we've got collective bargaining. Well, it didn't work out that way either because what happened is that all the various cities and public agencies around the state--this was 1974 by way of putting the proper context as to the date. The various public agencies around the state had said that they didn't have any enacting legislation to give life to the constitutional provisions, so they would not engage in collective bargaining. Even though on a number of occasions, the court had said that we had the constitutional right to bargain.

So what had happened was that--on one occasion the Supreme Court told us that we had to go back to the legislature, this is a legislative problem. And we went back to the legislature and they stalled and nothing happened. Finally, the court got a little tired of that and they appointed a blue ribbon committee to do a very unique thing: to establish by court decree guidelines for collective bargaining under the constitutional provision. An attorney named Ben Patterson was appointed chairman of that committee and they began to develop the guidelines. They held hearings and took testimony and finally got to the point where they were talking about the impasse process and the impasse process that they came up with was final and binding arbitration. At that point the state legislature said, this thing is getting out of hand. We don't want to give employees final and binding arbitration. This was 1974. At that point they finally passed the Public Employee Relations Act.

That began a whole series of organizing efforts throughout the state. When I became vice president in 1968, we had twenty-one locals in Florida. When I left in 1979, we had over 100 local unions in Florida. And they were all ninety-percent or better organized. So it did influence and help a lot in the organizing process. The 1974 statute was tested later in the case of Ryan vs. Dade County School Board, where they [the union] claimed that it was actually a test of the statute to see whether it was constitutional. And the court came down and said, "Yes, it is constitutional, that public sector unions have the same right to bargain as unions in the private sector"--they compared it to the private sector--"except for the right to strike." And there have been a number of tests since that time that have upheld that provision of the law.

In 1979, I left the fire fighters and we're talking about strikes and particularly in the public sector because they are all illegal. There is no place in the country that allows fire fighters to strike with impunity and that is certainly true in Florida. Florida has one of the harshest anti-strike provisions in the country, if you read the statutes you'll see the heavy penalties financially and otherwise can be imposed on public sector unions that strike. In 1980 I was elected to the Florida Legislature with the idea that I would be very quiet because of my union background; I knew that I was going to take a lot of heat and I had to be very quiet in the legislature. Ralph Haben, who was the Speaker of the House, introduced a provision to amend the constitution which would essentially eliminate the right to collective bargaining for public employees. And I found myself in a head-to-head battle with the Speaker of the House as a freshman legislator. It was an absolutely disastrous kind of a situation. However, we prevailed for only one reason: because it required a two-thirds vote to change the constitution. They had a majority but they didn't have the two-thirds required. And if any of you are interested in the history of that, you can go back and look and you'll be surprised at some of the people who voted for that provision which would have repealed the collective bargaining law. Some people from this very county who were at that time considered friends of labor, friends of the working people, voted for that provision under tremendous pressure from the Speaker of the House.

I just wanted to cover briefly a couple of incidents that I thought were interesting in my career. One, involved the mayor of the city of Orlando. We were trying to bargain with him for a number of months, almost a year as a matter of a fact, and he had fired the president of the local due to some of the agitation that came out of this attempt to negotiate with him. He fired him for appearing before the City Council without permission. We maintained that he was fired for union activity. We went to the courts under an old Civil Rights Act that passed just after the Civil War of the United States, U.S. 42nd:1983. This statute said that any person who discriminates under the color of law can be held accountable in a court of equity. And the mayor maintained that the City of Orlando was not a person, and therefore couldn't be held accountable. And the judge said, well that may be true but the mayor is certainly a person and we are going to dismiss the city as the defendant and hold the mayor in.

And the mayor began to understand what this was all about at that point, and we had our attorneys ask to subpoena the mayor's income tax returns for the past five years, since we were asking for damages. . And at that point he said, "I don't understand why we can't negotiate." And I said, "I don't either; we've been trying to negotiate with you for a long time." So we were able to get a contract in the City of Orlando through that process. By the way, that act has later been water-downed by the courts as you know, Joe [Kaplan], and anyone who's followed that through the courts.

We had a similar situation that Joe Kaplan handled in Sunrise, where we were organizing. We had four individuals who were heading up the organizing committee who were fired. They got a letter from the mayor which said, "Because of your activity, on behalf of promulgating the union, your services with the City are hereby terminated." Well, we had never received a letter like that before because they always have a million reasons why they let them go. Nobody ever says it's because they are organizing a union. In this case we got a judgment against the mayor which he failed to pay and we finally had to execute that judgment. We brought a pickup truck out to haul his furniture off. And he finally agreed to pay the damages.

And the other one that I thought was very interesting, and this is the last incident that I have to talk about, is that we were negotiating with the City of Miami Springs and we had hired Marshall Barry as an economist to review the budget of the city. We were looking for the answer to this age-old question, do they have any money that is available for pay raises. In the process, Marshall stumbled across some other inadequacies in their record keeping process, involving a six million sewer fund.

We were going to Special Master, and if I am not mistaken, this gentleman here [Jim Sherman] was the Special Master. He was waiting to hear the case and we had two people from the State Attorney's Office who showed up and were also interested in hearing Marshall's testimony. And the city manager came to me and said, "You know I don't see why we can't work this out; I don't see why we have to go through this whole Special Master process." And I said, "I don't either." He said, "Let's call off the Special Master hearing for a while; we'll delay it and we'll see if we can reach an agreement."

We had thirty-something issues, by the way, that were open in this hearing. And he and I sat down with a yellow pad like this and we negotiated a contract in a matter of about an hour and a half to two hours. He never ever said "no" once in the whole conversation. It was the most unusual experience for a labor leader to sit down with the boss on the other side and having him never, ever say no. Marshall, I have forgotten what the numbers were but it was somewhere about an eighteen percent raise and shorter work weeks, so--it was closer to thirty percent he tells me.

I just want to thank you for having had the opportunity to be here.

JAMES SHERMAN

James Sherman, an arbitrator since 1966, has heard over 2,000 cases in the private and public sectors. He is a member of the American Arbitration Association and served as the vice president of the National Academy of Arbitrators from 1986-87. Dr. Sherman is a Professor Emeritus of Industrial Relations at the University of South Florida and has been a member of the Florida Public employee Relations Commission, 1974 to the present.

I came from western New York, a very highly unionized area. In that period of time between graduating from high school and graduating from college, I was a member of the Railroad Brotherhood; the Teamsters; the Rubber Workers; United Auto Workers; and the Plant Guard Workers.

While working as a plant guard, I put myself through law school. The first job after law school was representing management, which I did for seven years. I then opened my own law practice and, as luck would have it, the unions came in as clients, and I represented fifteen different unions, for exactly seven years. I then got my Ph.D. and moved on to Florida, where I was a professor at the University of South Florida. I say "was" because I retired in June of this year.

It was a cultural shock to come to Florida. Because I had been so used to people accepting the idea of unions. The idea that a union representative had status equal to a manager or a politician. I remember the first questions that were asked of students. They went something like this: "Sure there was a need for unions at one time, but of course that is gone now. Management has learned how to treat employees."

I tell the story of my first case when I came to Florida. It was in the citrus industry. Management put on its case and what it amounted to was an employee left the plant without permission. I remember sitting there spinning my pencil. Why does a union even take a case like this. Because it seemed to be such an open and shut flagrant violation of a rule that they must know that the employee earned his dismissal. But then the union began to put on its case. The employee had worked twelve hours that day and had been told that he had to put in another several hours until his relief showed up. And it was even worse than that because he had a job in which he would spend thirty minutes inside the cooler, which was below freezing. And the next thirty minutes outside of the cooler in temperatures that were hovering around 100. It gets worse.

He not only had to work twelve hours that day. He worked twelve hours every day, seven days a week, for seven straight months. Not that he wanted to, but he was told either you do it or else. Pretty terrible, isn't it. Want to hear something even worse. I had to uphold that discharge. Why? Because the contract looked as though management wrote while the union was out of the room. It was stacked so in favor of management that my hands were completely tied. This kind of a story usually turns students around. Because we know that the need for unions had not disappeared.

Now, moving over into the public sector. Incidentally, my colleagues to the right of me and the ones before them [Charles Hall, Rodney Davis, Gilbert Porter] picked most of the meat off the material I was going to use, so I hand you a skeleton for what it is worth.

A few definitions. An arbitrator like myself is used in two different stages of the collective bargaining process. In order to resolve an impasse in bargaining is one stage. But the other stage is the most common, and that is grievance arbitration. Before the passage of the public employee bargaining bill here in Florida in 1975, we were engaging in collective bargaining and somewhat successfully, as Marshall [Barry] and Charlie [Hall] have told you.

But here is how it worked. It was a strange combination of politics and collective bargaining: because I would arrive at a Special Master hearing only to find out that the people had really reached agreement on their collective bargaining. But neither of them wanted to take responsibility for having agreed to what they had agreed to.

They needed somebody from the outside in order to take that responsibility so that they could sell it to their constituents. It wasn't a bad deal for me. They usually touted my qualifications several days or even weeks before I arrived. And after my decision they used to point to it and say, well we did the best we could but here is what the expert says that we ought to do.

Now, foolproof? Not quite, because too often there were political dissidents on the board who were trying to do a hatchet job on the people, who were agreeing to the collective agreement. And there were also political dissidents within the union, attempting to do the same thing to the union leadership.

It became a risky business for an arbitrator because the persons who were doing the hatchet jobs usually had access to the news media. They often took a shot at me in order to get at them. There is another risk to doing these interest arbitrations for the arbitrator. And that is the arbitrator exposes his own values. If somebody were to ask you, how much should a teacher be paid? How much should a policeman be paid? How much should a firefighter be paid? I defy you to come up with an answer which you can defend rationally. It comes down to a value system. It comes down to your value judgment. What were your experiences with any of these professionals. Have they served you well? Do you believe they have served the public well? And how do you apportion money to these kinds of services?

It is quite different in a grievance arbitration. The arbitrator could hide behind a lot of words. You never know what the arbitrator really believes. Whatever decision he comes to, he blames it on the wording in the contract.

Interesting things were going on at that time with grievance arbitration, as well. In many areas grievance arbitration was flourishing, in spite of the fact that it was not even binding. The winner could not take it into court and enforce it. This is how I became involved in the Pinellas County school system. They called me over because they had some very serious grievances with their teachers. We all knew that my decision was not final and binding; it had to be okayed by the school board.

So the arbitration was played out in the public and then played over again with the leaders of union and management. And the big question before the executive board session--which was the latter function--the big question was how will it sell in the boardroom? So, while I may have wanted to make a particular decision favoring the teachers, the teachers' representative was quick to say that it would be nice, except that it would get bounced right back at us by the school board. So in a sense, I was mediating at the same time I was arbitrating. The remarkable thing was, that I never had any of my decisions turned back, because we calculated just how far we could go.

And another interesting thing is when the public employee bargaining law came into effect, the parties had no interest in changing our procedure. We go through a hearing and then we go back and talk it over and they tell me what their real needs are. And how far you can go one way or the other and satisfy the parties.

The situation changed dramatically and not necessarily for the better, as far as I'm concerned, when the public employee bargaining law came into effect. Because now we had employers and public employees forced to bargain and forced to submit to this process of advisory arbitration. They were also free to ignore the advice they received. And in my experience, they have employed some very unsavory tactics in the process. Here is a typical scenario. The union presents a very good case for a substantial wage increase. Management presents a very weak case, almost no case at all. The arbitrator finds in favor of the union and awards the substantial increase.

Management then gives its good case to the news media. And everybody hears for the first time all the good reasons that management could not possibly give this wage increase. Well, I think Marshall Barry and Charlie Hall will recognize this, especially the Special Master case that I handled, because the city claimed to have no money to fund a wage increase. But they presented no evidence whatsoever to that effect. I awarded a ten percent across-the-board wage increase, and they gave nothing.

Then, the news media came out and said who is this college professor that claims to know our city finances better than we do. Well, then what I am to say, that there was no money in the budget, and it was nonsense to order a ten percent increase. Well, thanks to Marshall Barry who went on television and pointed out where the money was, and more than enough money to fund this increase. I felt vindicated. Unfortunately, many more people seem to remember the first half of that than the second half. So it's a dangerous business for an arbitrator, for a professional arbitrator who would like to go on doing grievance arbitration. And I guess with that I better close.